Ideological Representations of Nigerian Political Elites in Television Continental's Journalists' Hangout
Représentations idéologiques des élites politiques nigérianes dans l'émission Journalists' Hangout de Television Continental

Abiodun Jombadi, PhD
Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria
abiodun.jombadi@kwasu.edu.ng
0009-0007-6826-6090
Deborah Ayoola
Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria
ayoolamojibola@gmail.com

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Abstract: The paper analysed the linguistic patterns for representing the Nigerian political elites ideologically in Television Continental's *Journalists' Hangout*, adopting Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and van Dijk's Socio-cognition model of Critical Discourse Analysis. For data, ten episodes (from January to May 2025) were purposively selected using qualitative method, with extracts analyzed to identify discursive strategies and linguistic choices that constructed various ideologies on the programme. Findings revealed six ideologies associated with discussions related to Nigerian political elites on the programme, namely, *leadership responsibility, reverse pessimism, non-transparent accountability, populism, corruption and abuse of power, and disillusionment with leadership*. These ideologies imply that journalists' representations of the Nigerian political elites are both positive and negative, depending on their actions and societal impacts. Seven discursive strategies were deployed to construct these ideologies. They include *actor description, generalisation, labelling (positive and negative), number game, hyperbole, comparison,* and *authority.* The study concludes that journalists' linguistic choices reflect different ideologies which shape public opinion on Nigerian political elites.

Keywords Ideological representations, Nigerian political elites, Systemic Functional Grammar, Socio-cognition, Discursive Strategies

Résumé : Cet article analyse les schémas linguistiques de représentation idéologique des élites politiques nigérianes dans l'émission « Journalists' Hangout » de Television Continental, en s'appuyant sur la grammaire systémique fonctionnelle de Halliday et le modèle sociocognitif d'analyse critique du discours de van Dijk. Dix épisodes (de janvier à mai 2025) ont été sélectionnés de manière ciblée selon une méthode qualitative, et des extraits ont été analysés afin d'identifier les stratégies discursives et les choix linguistiques sous-jacents à la construction des différentes idéologies véhiculées par l'émission. Les résultats révèlent six idéologies associées aux discussions relatives aux élites politiques nigérianes : la responsabilité du leadership, le pessimisme inversé, le manque de transparence dans la reddition des comptes, le populisme, la corruption et l'abus de pouvoir, ainsi que la désillusion envers le leadership. Ces idéologies impliquent que la représentation des élites politiques nigérianes par les journalistes est à

la fois positive et négative, en fonction de leurs actions et de leurs impacts sociétaux. Sept stratégies discursives ont été déployées pour construire ces idéologies. Ces procédés incluent la description des acteurs, la généralisation, l'étiquetage (positif et négatif), les jeux de chiffres, l'hyperbole, la comparaison et l'argumentation d'autorité. L'étude conclut que les choix linguistiques des journalistes reflètent différentes idéologies qui influencent l'opinion publique sur les élites politiques nigérianes.

Mots- clés: Représentations idéologiques, élites politiques nigérianes, grammaire systémique fonctionnelle, sociocognition, stratégies discursives

*** Corresponding author: Abiodun Jombadi Email: abiodun.jombadi@kwasu.edu.ng**

Introduction

Talk shows are speech events where a host(s) guides a participant(s) through a predetermined topic. Television talk shows in Nigeria abound, with hosts and their participants discussing issues revolving around the economy, security, education, politics, and other matters arising. Talk show hosts in Nigeria often have to employ different strategies that help them achieve their aim for the discourse. They moderate the interaction, regulate turn by means of asking questions and selecting the person that gives the response, and sometimes perform repairs that aid the discourse to be channeled in the right direction. Talk shows are a genre of television programming that feature conversational exchanges between hosts, guests, and sometimes audience members, often focusing on current events, social issues, or personal stories (Timberg, 2020: 15). It is also a type of television program that involves a host facilitating a discussion or interview with one or more guests, often incorporating elements of entertainment, education, and social interaction. Talk shows are a form of para-social interaction, where audiences engage with hosts and guests through a mediated conversation, often blurring the lines between public and private spheres (Cerulo, 2020: 4). In other words, talk shows are a form of mediated conversation that blur the boundaries between public and private spheres, frequently incorporating elements of entertainment, education, and social commentary (Kumar, 2024: 24). Specifically, the ways in which Journalists' Hangout, a prominent media platform, linguistically constructs and reinforces power dynamics and ideological positions of the Nigerian political elites remain understudied. This study seeks to address this gap by analysing the linguistic and discursive strategies employed in the talk show to represent the Nigerian political elites, using Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and van Dijk's Socio-cognitive model of Critical Discourse Analysis. The representations of the Nigerian political elites on television talk shows, particularly *Journalists' Hangout* on Television Continental, offers valuable insights into ideological constructions and power dynamics. This study aims to explore these representations, examining how they shape public opinion, influence political decision-making, and reflect broader social and political structures. The following questions were formulated for this study:

(1) what linguistic patterns reflect ideological constructs which shape the representations of Nigerian political elites in *Journalist Hangouts'* programme? (2) what are the discursive strategies used to convey these ideological constructs?

1. The Media, Political Discourse and Discursive Representations

The media are the eyes and ears of the public. They provide information and alert their heterogeneous audiences of the changes that take place around them. The media consistently survey the environment and convey salient issues or mediated messages to the audience in order to reduce uncertainties and consequently react to the conflict or change in a rational way. The media usually scout round the environment and bring news of social, economic and

political developments, dangers that are threats to national stability, threats to public welfare, environmental pollution and degradation as well as scandals of varying dimensions to the people (Josephat, 2008: 25).

To Kawl and Gamble (1999) cited in Fajemisin (2018: 9), the media perform five functions in the society which are: serving as source of information and surveillance; agenda setting, structuring and interpreting our lives; connecting us with diverse groups in the society; acting as agents of socialization, and serving as means of entertainment. It is also evident that, beyond the traditional functions of the media to inform, educate and entertain the public, the mass media serve as watchdogs of the society, agenda setters and force multipliers. Through these functions, the mass media sensitize, enlighten and persuade members of the public to participate actively in developmental activities (Auwal, 2015). The media report on a variety of topics and we find a number of different genres represented in the media including genres such as sport reports, advertisements, and weather forecasts. A large number of news, however, are related to political topics. These genres do not simply report political events in neutral way, but they provide evaluations and thus can have impact on public opinion about politics and also on policy making.

Media discourse is a broad term which can refer to a totality of how reality is represented in broadcast and printed media from television to newspaper. Media discourse refers to political interviews, chat shows, radio phone- ins, and so on, where two people are interacting and an audience is listening. In this sense, media discourse is being viewed within an interactional rather than a representational or critical framework. Essentially, it is interested in spoken language in the context of the media. The media, through the television stations, disseminate information, news items, showcase political programmes, developmental projects and pitfalls of the various arms of government in a particular country. The mass media is generally regarded as a channel of communication that is capable of reaching heterogeneous audience simultaneously with uniform message.

Previously, as a specific example of political action and interaction, political discourse (and its many genres) may be singled out as a prominent way of `doing politics'. Indeed, most political actions (such as passing laws, decision making, meeting, campaigning, etc.) are largely discursive. Thus, besides parliamentary debates, bills, laws, government or ministerial regulations, and other institutional forms of text and talk, we find such political discourse genres as propaganda, political advertising, political speeches, media interviews, and political talk shows on TV, party programs, ballots, and so on (van Dijk, 1997). As actors and authors of political discourse and other political practices, politicians are not the only participants in the domain of politics. From the interactional point of view of discourse analysis, we therefore should also include the various recipients in political communicative events, such as the public, the people, citizens, the 'masses', and other groups or categories.

2. Data, Methodology and Theory

The data used were anchored by Television Continental journalists and purposively selected for analysis. Data elicitation came from ten programme editions between January and May 2025, a period when most citizens have begun to expect dividends of democracy from politicians voted into office since May, 2023. The choice of data was based on the fact that politics give media practitioners the freedom and opportunity to deploy linguistic resources in describing power and describing political elites (Anshase et al, 2022). TVC's *Journalists' Hangout* was selected because well-known and influential journalists and guests gather daily to discuss various topics on the talk show.

The data qualitatively analyzed were initially in video format and downloaded from TVC's YouTube channel. The researcher watched and transcribed these videos, drawing extracts from each. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach and Michael Halliday's systemic functional grammar were used for data analysis. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), known by another name as Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), is a theory of language that discusses the system of language, like grammar and the function of language. The function of language makes us understand the intention of the text so Systemic Functional Linguistics is related to social context because it does not only explain the system of the language but also the function of language. The structure or form of language is also functional because it serves specific communicative functions in social situations (Bache, 2010: 13). The function is more important than a structure; nonetheless, in order to make successful utterances, one must grasp and understand the structure of language (Endarto, 2017: 23). In Systemic Functional Linguistics, the meaning-making process is served through three metafunctions. The first metafunction is ideational. According to this metafunction, the discourse participant constructs reality based on his perspective. The transitivity system (process, participant, and circumstances) reflects this metafunction. Experiential and logical function are two components of ideational metafunction (Grady, 2017: 6). Under the interpersonal function, language expresses social reality and relates to the interaction between speakers/writers and listeners/readers. Textual meaning expresses the relation of language to its environment and is realized through system of theme. It also relates to the construction of text which portray the sequence, flow, cohesion and continuity of discourse. According to Fryer (2007: 7), textual matafunctions are encoded in clause complexes, in which "clusters" of clauses and their experiential meanings combine to form elaborate interclause messages. Clauses can be described in terms of their interdependency (taxis), as either paratactic (equal status) or hypotactic (unequal status). They can also be defined in terms of their logico-semantic relationship (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 376), as expansion or projection.

van Dijk's (2000) socio-cognitive model is based on understanding ideological structures and social relations of power embedded in discourse (as cited in Jahedi et al., 2014). van Dijk (2003) defines 'social power' in terms of control and ideologies as "the basis of the social

representations of groups". The socio-cognitive approach is concerned with unraveling ideologies shared by social institutions or groups, as embedded in their discourses. The use of the term 'triangle' by van Dijk signifies the relatedness of discourse, cognition and society. He sees cognition as an interface between social practice and discourse. Social structures are defined by ideologies (cognitions); ideologies are the product of a social institution. These group-specific ideologies, in turn, shape the discourses or texts produced by members of such groups. The discourses produced by the group members are then used to maintain social interactions. van Dijk (2007 p.44) highlights principles central to the analysis of ideology in discourse: (i) Emphasise positive things about Us; (ii) Emphasise negative things about Them; (iii) De-emphasise negative things about Us; and (iv) De-emphasise positive things about them. According to van Dijk (2006), the macro-ideological strategies are discursive ways to either enhance or mitigate "our"/ "their" bad characteristics and, as a result, mark discourse ideologically. van Dijk goes further to propose some of the discursive strategies for realizing positive self-representation and negative other representation as labelling, actor description, categorization, euphemism, evidentiality, example/illustration, generalization, hyperbole, lexicalization, metaphor, self-glorification, number game, polarization, presupposition and victimization. These strategies are utilized in news reports to construct polarity as well as social inequality and bias.

Labelling is a linguistic process of identifying and describing a person or group of people with specific labels or tags. Positive or negative labels are ascribed to people depending on the perceived social attitudes associated with the people or group. While positive labels approve of a group's activities and ideologies, negative labels condemn it. Evidentiality is the use of evidence or proof to make opinions, claims or points of view more plausible, reliable and credible in news reports. van Dijk (2006) believes that providing evidence and giving credibility to opinions influence the mental models of recipients or readers by persuading them to accept views as real and true. In using this discourse strategy, evidence or proofs from eyewitnesses/victims or references to authorities are provided to authenticate ingroup's good deeds and outgroup's bad behaviour. This becomes evident in conflict news reporting that involves discourses about "Us" and "Them". Number game is a discourse strategy used to emphasise objectivity and enhance credibility in news reports. Numbers are a means of representing facts against opinions and impressions. They are mainly used to emphasise "their" bad actions and "our" good ones. van Dijk (2006) observes that numerical descriptions of the victims in conflict news reports predominantly signal precision and hence truthfulness. Hyperbolism, as a discourse strategy for enhancing meaning, is used for ideologically biased polarisation of 'us' and 'them'. In representing 'self' and 'others', certain hyperbolic items or expressions are used for positive impression formation and negative acts magnification. The expressions help in constructing the preferred mental model which tends to emphasise the

negative deeds of the other party. Victimisation is a discourse strategy of creating polarity by representing the negative deeds of the other and portraying self as victim. Here, the negative behaviour of the 'outgroup' is associated with threats while the 'ingroup' is represented as victims of such threats. Topicalisation entails the discursive strategy of projecting the most important information in a discourse. The topic of a discourse could take the form of a title or a descriptive heading; it could also be in the form of abstract themes that characterise the purpose of a whole discourse. Lexicalisation denotes the expression of concepts and beliefs via deliberate choice of lexical items. Depersonalisation is a discourse strategy that involves implicit generalisation of self's views by suppressing the actual advocates of the opinions. In depersonalisation, there is no explicit inclusion of precise references to the doers or speakers of a particular discursive action or opinion. Thus, the speakers or doers are suppressed while their opinions or actions are foregrounded. The essence is to draw the attention of readers to the fact that there are experts who have drawn conclusions on the events while at the same time subtly projecting personal views.

3. Data Analysis

Television Continental Station (TVC) is a Nigerian 24-hour news television channel based in Lagos, Nigeria. It features the talk show, *Journalists' Hangout.* The programme discusses various topical national issues ranging from politics, insecurity, business, education to sports, where the anchor engages top journalists and other guests to give fresh perspectives to issues for audience to have informed opinions. They usually challenge authorities and raise questions about certain matters. It is an audience participatory programme engaging audience across Nigeria, Africa and the world featuring breathtaking analysis of socio-political issues in Nigeria. Also, audience can join the conversation on social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

Our data analysis revealed six ideological issues related to the representations of Nigerian political elites on ten episodes of the programme where discussions were largely focused on Nigerian politicians assessing their performance. The ideologies include *leadership responsibility, reversed pessimism, non-transparent accountability, populism, corruption and power abuse and disillusionment with leadership.* Analysis further explains the operations of the ideational metafunction in the construction of the ideologies.

3.1 Leadership Responsibility

Leadership responsibility refers to the obligation of leaders to make timely decisions that promote the well-being and success of their country, organisation, team or community. It also requires empathy, transparency and communication to build trust and foster a positive and productive environment. All across the data, five discursive strategies are used to construct the ideology of leadership responsibility. They include *actor description, generalisation, labelling, number game* and *hyperbole.* In the texts, certain politicians of Southern extractions are

constructed in good light foregrounding their influences among their constituents as remarkably encouraging. Their positive attribution is evidenced by *number game*, adumbrated through *hyperbole* and *generalisation*, all in a bid to foster their *positive labelling*.

> (1) We saw Senator Gbenga Daniel do something in his constituency of Ogun State the Ijebu area, where he comes from.
>
> (2) Look at what Senator Ifeanyi Uba has done, massive. This is really a game changing initiative and everyone will point at what Senator Ifeanyi Uba has done.
>
> (3) One key thing about what Senator Tokunbo has done is the fact that, the way he distributed those items. Ten thousand households across ninety eight wards in his constituency and covering sixteen Local governments and Local Council Development Area (LCDA) in the Lagos East senatorial districts.
>
> (4) It is good,very well. I am happy that the gentleman, Governor of Ekiti State is doing well. With the way Oyebanji is going, there may not be opposition in Ekiti State anymore.

Sample 1 presents Senator Gbenga Daniel's impact as a demonstration of a strong commitment to leadership responsibility in his constituency of Ogun State, specifically the Ijebu area. The material process - "saw" introduces the goal of the independent clause which stipulates the beneficiaries of his positive exploits, that is, his constitutents. Same strategy of actor description constructs the ideology of leadership responsibility for other political actors with dint of *generalisation*, *labelling*, *number game* and *hyperbole*. For instance, in Sample 2, the strategy of *generalisation* is used to formulate prejudice about the positive characteristic of Senator Ifeanyi Uba and his achievement. The prejudice expressed is captured in the the second clause of the compound sentence which follows the first independent clause: "…everyone will point at what Senator Ifeanyi Uba has done".

At times, text producers engage the strategy of *number game* to construct a vivid description of the impacts of the achievements of political actors as shown in Sample 3 where the adjunct of the independent clause reflects the actual number of beneficiaries of Senator Tokunbo Abiru - "…ten thousand households across ninety eight wards… covering sixteen Local governments and Local Council Development Area". Aside flaunting numbers as evidence of the huge impacts of the activities of political actors, their achievements are also captured in exaggerated sense drawing attention to what might be the citizens' appreciative response to the gestures. Sample 4 captures this potential citizens' exaggerated appreciative response to the responsible leadership of Governor 'Biodun Oyebanji of Ekiti State saying that "With the way Oyebanji is

going, there may not be opposition in Ekiti State anymore". What is common to all the positive attributions constructed for the political actors in all these samples is the positive labelling generated by the pattern of description which portrays them as responsible leaders. This implies that actor description is a powerful tool for labeling in political discourse.

3.2 Reverse Pessimism

This ideology refers to the tendency to expect and believe in the best possible outcomes, even in challenging or uncertain situations**.** As political discourse in Nigeria is often associated with gory tales of woeful performances among Nigerian politicians, any construction that is capable of gleaning a tint of hope amidst pervasive reports of governmental failure, can be termed reverse pessimism. Few of the samples from our data construct situations and happenings that defy the negative norm that is associated with Nigeria's political landscape. Text producers deployed two discursive strategies to construct the ideology of reverse pessimism. They are *comparison* and *positive labelling*.

(5) Making promises and never fulfilling it is the past time of politicians in our time but the trend is gradually changing as Easter Celebration came early for pensioners in Abia State, South East Nigeria.

(6) Let us give Governor Otti the credit for the good thing that he is doing in the state. No one can argue that Abia State that was in the past to signpost misgovernance, bad governance and incompetent leadership has become a model in our country for good governance, for purposeful leadership.

Samples 5 and 6 exemplify reverse pessimism. They highlight a departure from the entrenched narrative of unfulfilled political promises. The attribute of the relational process - "Making promises and never fulfilling it" is constructed as the norm in Nigeria's political space. However, the second clause of the compound sentence unveils a positive departure in Abia State, where pensioners were paid much earlier than they used to be paid. The established technique in this sample is the comparison of the incumbent government to the past administrations in the state. The strategy positively represents one government while negatively representing others. The beneficiaries, pensioners, experience tangible benefits, challenging the dominant discourse of disillusionment with political leaders. Through this action, the process of promise-keeping replaces the previously prevalent pattern of broken promises, signaling a shift towards renewed trust and optimism in governance.

This construction also indicates positive labelling, shifting from a negative perception of governance in Abia State to a positive acknowledgment of Governor Otti's impactful leadership. Here, the goal of the material process, Governor Otti engineers the transformative change in the state. The material process "doing," highlights the governor's proactive efforts, which have converted the state into a model of purposeful leadership in the country. This

reverse pessimism fosters renewed optimism and trust among constituents, demonstrating the power of effective leadership in challenging long-standing narratives of misgovernance. The adoption of positive labelling unveils a strategy that promotes a culture of appreciation, encouraging leaders to strive for excellence. It is a form of social influence, where the speaker's positive labeling encourages others to adopt similar values and behaviors. By focusing on the positive aspects of governance and leadership, the speaker constructs a narrative that inspires and motivates.

3.3 Non-transparent accountability

This ideology accounts for the situation where governments or institutions adopt transparency measures that are superficial, misleading, or difficult to access, creating a façade of openness (Kumar, 2014: 23). Three discursive strategies were deployed to construct this ideology, namely, actor description, negative labelling and authority.

(7) Former Kogi governor may be out of power but he appears to be throwing his weight around the anti-graft agency.

(8) He actually told his lawyer, "I'm going for medical treatment; grant me leave for me to go abroad" and he included the medical report. But this one, he did not include it; that's why the EFCC is suspicious.

(9) The panel is mandated to invite the former speaker of the eighth and ninth assembly and the former Governor El Rufai because Obasani has lamented about the huge debt left behind by the past administration.

Sample 7 casts a narrative of undue and overbearing influence of governmental institution around a former Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello. He was alleged to have misappropriated billions of naira belonging to the State. As the Nigeria's anti-graft body, the EFCC moved to effect his arrest. Several intrigues manifested to frustrate the process. Hence, the speaker opted for the material process "appears to be throwing his weight around…" to illustrate the surreptitious machinations orchestrated by the ex-governor to parry his arrest and trial. The imagery deployed by the speaker in the material process exemplifies the abuse of political power commonly associated with most Nigerian politicians.

Additional example of the abuse of a transparent process of accountability is rendered in **Sample 8** where the personae presented a medical report in order to obtain official permission to travel for medical treatment. His omission of certain essential documents raised concern, revealing inconsistencies in the ex-governor's attitude, thus sparking EFCC's skepticism. The material processes "told," "included," and "withheld" highlight the discrepancy, implying potential deceit necessitating further investigation.

The ideological representation of non-transparent accountability in the actor description manifests in the way that the ex-governor projected the disposition of willing cooperation to surrender to the anti-graft body but in his own terms, thus creating a facade of openness while manipulating the process to suit his planned actions. This implies that political elites in Nigeria are averse to being held responsible for their actions.

Sample 9 highlights a quest for transparent accountability, where "the panel", the actor of the material process, was mandated to invite key figures, including the former Speaker of the eighth and ninth assembly and former Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, to address concerns about the massive debt left by their administrations. Senator Obasani, the proponent of this inquiry, emphasised the need for transparency. The material process verb, "invite," underscores the panel's investigative role, aiming to uncover the truth behind the alleged debt. Through this inquiry, the beneficiaries, the people of Kaduna State may gain clarity on the financial decisions of the past administration.

3.4 Populism

Populism is a political ideology that emphasizes the interests and concerns of ordinary people, often putting them against those of the elites or the minority. Also, it is a political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elites groups, often by emphasizing emotions, identities and direct communication (Mudden and Kalwasser, 2022: 45). The media, print and electronic, are characteristically vanguards of issues that promote the welfare and concerns of the masses. On *Journalists' Hangout* episodes, speakers oftentimes position themselves as advocates of people's interests, prioritising those concerns in their takes, weighing them against the excesses of Nigerian political elites. Two discursive strategies - *generalisation* and *comparison* construct the ideology of populism in our data.

(10) Let's see the governor of Ogun do it. Other federal lawmakers, let's see them. Let everybody jump in and assist in this very difficult time that we found ourselves**.**

(11) We challenge these politicians. We challenge the governors. We are beginning to see them respond, and it's been slow for some of them. But as we have seen with Senator Yayi Olamilekan, Senator Ifeanyi Uba. Infact, Ifeanyi Uba took it to a whole new level, an unbelievable level - the stadium was jam-packed.

Sample 10 embodies populist ideals, calling for collective action and leadership accountability. The speaker demands that the Governor of Ogun and federal lawmakers take responsibility and provide assistance during a challenging period. The beneficiary, the people of Ogun and Nigeria, would benefit from the leaders' proactive involvement. The material process, "let...jump in and assist", emphasizes the need for collaborative effort and urgent action from

those in power. The striking generalisation - "let everybody jump in" portends an imagery of urgency and precariousness of the situation. The populist dimension of the submission emphasises a direct challenge to political authorities to salvage a people in dire situation. The implication here is that the political elites are the custodians of people's safety, welfare and security. Political leaders in every clime are entrusted with the people's mandate and are thus to be held accountable by same people as deem necessary. The media midwife this role holding leaders accountable.

In **Sample 11**, the speaker deployed *comparison* as a strategy to challenge certain politicians to imbibe the responsive leadership demonstrated by two Nigerian politicians, Senators Yayi Olamilekan and Ifeanyi Uba. The actor of the material process is the pronominal "we," representing the collective voice of the people, challenging politicians and governors to take action just as the duo have done. The beneficiaries of this action are the citizens, who are seeking responsive governance and accountability from their leaders. The material process, "challenge," highlights the people's proactive role in demanding change, while the response from politicians like Senator Yayi Olamilekan and Senator Ifeanyi Uba demonstrates a shift towards populist ideals, prioritizing the needs and voices of the people. By acknowledging Ifeanyi Uba's exceptional response, which drew a massive crowd, the speaker underscores the power of grassroots mobilization in shaping political discourse.

3.5 Corruption and Abuse of power

Corruption is use of public power for private benefit, involving acts of bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and other forms of unethical conduct and abuse of power. It is the excessive or unjustified exercise of power, involving the disregard of rules, procedures, and norms, and the violation of human rights (Ikelegbe**,** 2019: 12). Three discursive strategies construct the ideologies of corruption and power abuse in our data. They are *actor description, number game* and *generalisation.*

(12) A kind of person the former president trusted so much that he extended his stay only to be involved in this kind of criminal fraudulent act, using companies, different companies linked to family members and associates of his to launder more than eighty billion naira.

(13) Bring the enemy to your side, it is not by demolishing people's habitation that you can actually get them to support you. No, you do not have the control, the support of the assembly members; you do not have that of the local government chairmen; you don't want to conduct elections.

(14) Yes, it's quite unfortunate what is happening. That is the lot of so many governors that just came to power**.**

The headword of the nominal group in Sample 12 constructs criminality and corruption around a trusted associate of a former president. Nigerian politicians and their cronies often occupy the epicentre in discussions that border corruption and misappropriation of public funds. The mentioned description of the president's associates in the criminality and corruption saga is heightened by the deployment of the strategy of number game specifying the huge amount diverted - "eighty billion naira". An egregious breach of trust, like the one described, has severely damaged national coffers and eroded public faith in leadership in Nigeria.

Aside embezzlement and misappropriation of public fund, power abuse is constructed around the political class in Nigeria. Sample 13 represents a Nigerian governor as unpopular based on the history of his attempted use of force to curry the supports of political opponents in his state. His dictatorial tendency is illustrated through *actor description.*The speaker, in Sample 14, maintains that such behaviour is a shared pattern among many governors in Nigeria. The verb in the relational process connects the exophoric pronominal, *that,* in the Carrier position to the attribute of power abuse associated with "many governors". The *generalisation* strategy encountered in the second declarative clause foregrounds the recurrence of the abusive behaviour.

3.6 Disillusionment with leadership

Disillusionment is a state of profound disappointment, disenchantment and discontentment with person, institution or system often resulting from unmet expectations, broken promises, or perceived hypocrisy (Oyedepo, 2023: 7). This ideology is constructed using two strategies of *actor description* and *comparison.*

(15) Whether Yahaya Bello has stolen so much money, I don't know because I wasn't working with him. I could even be working with him, he would not let me know something**.**

(16) Again, I blame governor Fubara and I am truly disappointed in him. Some of the action that the has taken in the last few days and weeks shock me as a person because I used to think that look, this is someone completely different to Wike(former Governor of Rivers).

(17) The government will mess up the case if it is during the former EFCC Chairman's tenure.

The construction of shadiness around the character of the former Kogi State governor, Yahaya Bello in Sample 15, is actor description reflection of a deep-seated disillusionment with Governor Yahaya Bello's leadership, marked by doubts about his integrity. He is represented as unaccountable, suggesting that his subjects suffered from compromised governance under his

leadership. The material process "stolen" suggests alleged corruption, fueling disillusionment. Sample 16 reveals a stark contrast between an initial expectation and the current reality implying the deployment of the comparison strategy. Here, the speaker expressed his profound disappointment with the goal of the material process, Governor Fubara whom he expected to be a better version of the ex-governor of the state in person of Nyesom Wike. The speaker believed that Fubara would diverge from the perceived shortcomings of his predecessor, Wike. In Sample 17, disillusionment with the leadership style of the political elites in Nigeria is constructed through the strategies of actor description and comparison. The actor of the material process, "the government" is constructed as unscrupulous meddler, notorious for interfering in the affairs of the EFCC, an institution saddled with the mandate of tackling economic and financial crimes in the country. The speaker constructs a profound disillusionment with the government's ability to handle a corruption case transparently effectively, expressing lack of trust, stemming from perceptions of incompetence and corruption during the former EFCC Chairman's tenure. The sample reflects a subtle deployment of the strategy of comparison.

4. Discussion of Findings

The study examined the construction of ideologies around the Nigerian political elites in Television Continental's *Journalists' Hangout.* Various strategies deployed by various speakers in the construction of the ideologies were investigated. Analyses reveal six ideologies constructed by various speakers to represent the elites, namely, *leadership responsibility, reverse pessimism, non-transparent accountability, populism, corruption* and *power abuse and disillusionment*. Seven discursive strategies were deployed to construct the ideologies - *actor desciption, generalisation, labelling (positive and negative), number game, hyperbole, comparison,* and *authority.*

Ideology of *leadership responsibility* utilised the strategies of *actor description, generalisation, positive labelling, number game* and *hyperbole*. Ideology of *reverse pessimism* utilised the strategies of *comparison* and *positive labelling.* Ideology of n*on-transparent accountability* utilised the strategies of *actor description, negative labelling* and *authority*. Ideology of *populism* utilised the strategies of *generalisation* and *comparison.* Ideology of *corruption and power abuse* utilised the strategies of *actor description, number game* and *generalisation*. Ideology of *disillusionment* utilised the strategies of *actor description* and *comparison.*

In the construction of leadership responsibility, certain politicians of Southern Nigeria extractions are constructed in good light representing their influences among their constituents as remarkably encouraging. Their positive attribution is evidenced through the strategies of *number game*, *hyperbole,* and *generalisation*, thus fostering their *positive labelling.* The implication of this representation is that few politicians can be exempted from the pervasive culture of impunity and non-performance associated with the political elites generally in Nigeria. Few sampled data utilised the strategies of *comparison* and *positive labelling* to implicate

developments that defy retrogressive stereotypes commonly associated with Nigeria's political landscape, thus constructing a ray and beacon of hope for the Nigerian masses.
The ideological representation of non-transparent accountability utilised the strategies of *actor description, negative labelling* and *authority* to cast a narrative of undue and overbearing influence of governmental institutions around certain politicians who mischievously strategise to truncate their arrest and trial by anti-graft agencies in Nigeria. This construction exemplifies the abuse of political power commonly associated with most Nigerian politicians. In terms of advocating for the people's welfare, speakers on the programme utilised the discursive strategies of *generalisation* and *comparison* to emphasise the interests and concerns of ordinary people, often putting them against those of the elites or minority. The adoption of the material process specifically enabled the use of imagery to flaunt the achievements of few politicians putting them against the non-performance of majority of Nigeria's political elites.

Three discursive strategies construct the ideologies of corruption and power abuse in the data, namely, *actor description, number game* and *generalisation*. While the culture of dictatorship among Nigerian governors, for example, is illustrated through *actor description*, the adoption of *generalisation* strategy foregrounds the recurrence of this abusive behaviour. As a result, speakers construct the ideology of disillusionment among the people utilising the discursive strategies of *actor description* and *comparison*. The strategy of *actor description* reflects resonant disillusionment by the people while *comparison* reveals a stark contrast between the speaker's expectation and current reality in the political terrain, implying the usual disappointment that characterises citizens' expectations in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Analyses and findings have revealed the linguistic resourcefulness of the Journalists' Hangout talk show. Speakers' linguistic choices reflect different ideological predispositions to public governance system in Nigeria. Various discussions are shaped by discourse strategies which portray the attributes of Nigerian political elites and the expectations of the citizens. Study demonstrates the availability of a responsible journalistic practice in Nigeria where political leadership is held accountable and the welfare of citizens is prioritised and predominated.

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