

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE MEDIA: A CDA OF SLOGANS OF SOME SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract

Newspapers are powerful tools of sending information to larger audiences. They serve as mediators between government and the citizens in a state. An effective use of the media facilitates propagating governments' and people's visions and opinions to the national and global communities. This study investigates and analyses newspaper slogans that appear both offline and online with particular attention to the Nigerian context. It looks at the ways and manner newspapers employ language to construct identity through slogans. The study adopts a combination of Fairclough's (1989) theory of social practice and Halliday's (1970) Systemic Functional Grammar in analysing the data. The study finds out that newspapers are creative in using linguistic resources available to them to construct the ideology of positive-self through slogans. The study also reveals that newspapers' slogans are embedded with institutional power and ideology. The study concludes that the relationship between language and identity as demonstrated within the context of media is embedded with power and ideology.

Keywords: ideology, newspapers, media, positive-self

Introduction

For many generations, societies have embraced the media to get updated and promote opinions, products, events, policies etc. Through the various forms of media, millions of information flourishes to millions of people around the world. It is also a platform that easily provides the public with unlimited access to latest information of public interests. It is also observed that most of the knowledge of entertainment, social, financial and political realities of our lives is not obtained from first-hand experience but on the basis of the text we are exposed to by the media. As the fourth estate of democracy, the media are politically dedicated to building and safeguarding the interests of a country through representation of the will of the citizens through politics, events and situations. Newspapers have become an indispensable part of human life. As a tool of mass communication, newspapers play significant roles in informing members of society about different perspectives of their lives. It is an essential source of diversified information meant to shape public opinions. Newspaper is one of the most important platforms of obtaining news. Through newspapers, government and its citizens exchange opinions, promote policies, and maintain relationships.

A slogan is a short sentence or phrase chosen as encapsulating the beliefs or ideals of an individual, family, organisation or institution. Bloor and Bloor (2007:73) define slogans as “fixed expressions, usually chosen carefully by organisers and activists, who are often chanted by political groups and protesters at demonstrations. Slogans are also widely used by advertisers and encouraged by football teams”. Slogans are generally very apt to the occasion as they contribute in understanding the thought and visions of groups, trade organisations, institutions etc. For many generations, the art of coining slogans has been highly valued. It is sometimes unimaginable to think of a group, trade, or organisation without a slogan. Thus, slogans are mainly

employed to promote belief systems, programmes and products. Hence, news outlets such as newspapers use slogans in order to build their identities for the purpose of influencing the mind-sets of their readers. They create and select slogans to win the minds of the readers to believe in what they are reporting. In view of the above, this study sets out to analyse selected slogans of some Nigerian newspapers with particular attention to the language properties with the aim of unravelling the ideological construction of identity. The study is critical discourse analysis in nature as it explores how newspapers compete to dominate the minds of the readers.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Van Dijk (1993:1) believes that CDA (popularly known as Critical discourse analysis) is “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context”. Therefore, CDA explicitly pays much attention to the understanding, exposure and ultimate rejection of social inequality such as racism, xenophobia and gender discrimination in a society or community. The notions of ideology, power, hierarchy and gender together with sociological variables were all viewed as relevant for an interpretation or explanation of text.

CDA is designed to make implicit the causes and connections of language on one hand and power and ideology on the other by linking them to local, international, institutional, and societal matters. Thus, critical discourse analysis concerns with examining what is not said rather than looking for the veiled meanings or “reading between the lines” since texts cannot be viewed in isolation and must always consider context. According to Fairclough (1989) language is a social practice. Thus, discourse involves the use of language in speech and writing and is shaped by discursive event, the situation, institutional and social structure. Therefore, language contributes in the

construction of social realities. This view establishes connection between the media and discourse where the media uses institutional discourse to construct reality. Fairclough (1992) argues that every instance of language use has three dimensions: it is a spoken or written language text; it is an interaction between people involving processes of producing and interpreting the text; and it is a piece of social practice. Thus, discourse as social practice implies dealing with issues that are important for social analysis such as the institutional circumstance of the discursive event and how that shapes the nature of the discourse practices and constitutive effects of discourse.

Wodak (2001: 2) describes the purpose of CDA as trying to analyse the “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language”. It does not limit itself to the analysis of the immediate formal properties of a text but rather it situates the text in its wider social, economic, historical, cognitive and political context. It critically examines how a text relates to other texts; how it is constituted by the existing social practices and constitutive of other new social practices. Bloor & Bloor (2007: 13) are of the view that the aims of CDA are mainly to uncover the socio-political inequalities based on political, economic, cultural, religious, or gendered grounds that exist in a particular society. CDA seeks to bring out the hidden way in which institutions and their discourse shape our thinking. Central to the notion of CDA is the relationships of language, power and ideology.

In relation to media discourse, CDA characterises newspaper in terms of power by virtue of being unique access to the public ear and institutionalises their rights of narration. **Wodak and Busch (2004) believe that media as representations of public space may be said to be as sites of social struggle and power, particularly in terms of the language of the mass media. Media institutions often purport to be neutral in that they provide space for public discourse, reflect states of affairs disinterestedly, and give the perceptions and arguments of the newsmakers” while they often have hidden socio-political agenda**

that lie at the heart of the matter. Van Dijk (1984) notes that the notion of media news can be described from the following perspectives:

1. New information about events, things or person.
2. A (TV or Radio) programme type in which news items are presented.
3. A news item or report, i.e., a text or discourse on radio, on TV or in the newspaper, in which new information is given about recent events.

The specific aim of news is persuasion. It does not aim at promoting goods as in advertisements from a company or industry. Economically, news is also a market commodity that must be promoted and sold. Ideologically, news promotes the dominant beliefs and opinions of the elite group in society implicitly. It involves formulation of meanings in such a way that they are not merely understood but also accepted as the truth or at least as possible truth. The rhetorical structures put forward are meant to enhance the beliefs of the readers assigned to the proposition of the text. To achieve the persuasive rhetoric in the news, there is need for argumentative structure where there are representation of the textual information in memory, organizing information in a better way, enhancing the chances for its retrieval and use and influencing intended beliefs and opinion changes. Van Dijk (1991) argues that the mass media have nearly exclusive control over the symbolic resources needed to manufacture popular consent, especially in the domain of ethnic relations. Newspapers in particular can be thought of as compendia of particular genres of news stories, headlines, editorials, opinion pieces, columns, political cartoons and feature articles which are *prima foci* for the discursive deployment of these symbolic resources. Thus, media representation of news stories is far from being an objective representation of “what is out there”, but offering a version of the world that is shaped by political, financial, institutional, personal and temporal constraints.

Media Discourse

Media discourse is the interaction that takes place through a broadcast platform in which the discourse is oriented to a non-present reader, listener or viewer. It is the discourse meant for the non-present recipients, the readers, listeners or viewers cannot make instantaneous responses to the producer(s). Thus, media discourse can be regarded as a discourse manufactured on-record to form interaction with the public. The power of the media is constituted in the ability to characterise the events of the day and the social structure of society in a particular way. Therefore, the relationship between the press and policy makers is bidirectional because the press sculpt public opinion to rationalise policy decisions of the policy makers. They do so by reflecting the perspectives and interests of established power. At the same time, the press also drive policy decisions by shaping public opinion to which policy makers in democratic societies must respond (Hart 2014). Chomsky and Hermann (1988) argue that the news media functions like propaganda because information is designed to promote a particular argument or point of view often one that is beneficial to those in power. To achieve this, news outlets employ five filters to influence the stories we read and hear and in the form we receive them; the way information is altered by these as well as filters the public agreement with both information and ideologies that structure it. This is not real agreement but it is manufactured consent. These filters are:

- a. Media ownership
- b. Advertising income
- c. The source of news stories
- d. How groups and individuals respond to stories
- e. Communism must be avoided at all cost

In view of the above, newspapers as forms of the public media are the prime vehicles for manufacturing consent, as they allow contact with large numbers of people, who willingly read to obtain information.

Besides, as a form of public media, the newspaper is one of the principal means of gaining access to information on different issues both domestic and international. They shape the way we think and perceive situations in our lives. This includes the way we look at issues that are related to our social, cultural, financial and political spheres. Like other news outlets, newspapers are tasked with finding the facts and delivering them with neutrality so that the public would know the truth about issues and events. They are also meant to make commentaries on why wars are fought, why policies are accepted or rejected, why and how change in policies affect our societies and why we should embrace or avoid certain issues and events. Newspapers also sometimes point out the dangers associated with certain actions of the government or its citizens. Representation of political speeches, commentaries, parliamentary debates, commentaries on government policies etc. is usually obtained from newspapers. However, newspapers inform the public to be aware of their civic responsibilities in their countries and create awareness on what is going in the political activities of a country including the activities of the leaders they elected.

Having obtained the institutional power of manufacturing consent through constitutional means, newspaper publishers form or create ideological positions through slogans. They coin slogans to construct positive self-identity so as to gain public acceptance over their rivals. Therefore, the coinage of slogans by newspapers focuses on gaining public attention. It is also meant for wider publicity as well as building confidence on the readers. Fowler (1991) believes news is a form of practice, a product of social and political world on which it reports. News is a representation of construction; it is not a value-free reflection of facts. This study sets to prove the slogans of newspapers as an important carrier of ideology.

Language, Power and Ideology

CDA is critical enterprise centred on unravelling the relationship between language on one hand, and power and ideology on the other. Chieppillo and Fairclough (2002) believe that ideology is a system of ideas, values and beliefs oriented to explaining a given political order, legitimizing existing hierarchies and power relations and preserving group identities. Ideology explains both horizontal structure (the division of labour) of the society and its vertical structure (the separation of rulers and ruled). Bloor and Bloor (2007:10) see ideology as a set of beliefs or attitudes shared by members of a particular social group. Every discourse is a product of ideology as those elements of beliefs and attitudes are not held consciously by the individuals; rather, they are embedded in the thoughts of the shared speech community. Van Dijk (1995:33) maintains that ideologies are often articulated and based on the ideological square which include; emphasizing positive things about us; emphasizing negative things about them; de-emphasizing negative things about us; de-emphasizing positive things about them. Ideology is a complex notion as different names and functions were given to the term. Thompson (1984:4) puts it that ideology is “linked to the process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power to-maintain domination...by disguising, legitimating, or distorting those relations”.

Hart (2014) believes that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a particular form of discourse analysis which, in one guise at least, seeks to disclose the ideological and persuasive properties of text and talk which might not be immediately apparent without the assistance of a systemised descriptive framework such as a grammar or typology. Fairclough (1989) views that the “critical” component of CDA implies to the unravelling of the causes and connections that are often hidden in a text or talk through systematic inquiry upon linguistic elements that make up a discourse.

Fowler (1991) views ideology in the neutral sense of a world view; as “a largely unconscious theory of the way the world works accepted as common sense”. Common-sense refers to conventions that embody ideological assumptions that are routinely drawn upon in discourse; thus, the effectiveness of ideology largely depends on being merged with common-sense. In other words, ideologies are means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which many people are not aware of. Therefore, Fairclough (1989:94) views that in discourse interpretation, conventions that embody ideological assumptions are drawn upon which are taken as mere common sense. These assumptions contribute towards sustaining existing power relations. They establish relations between text and world.

Ideologies are seen as normalized patterns of beliefs and values (Hodge and Kress 1993). From a critical standpoint, however, ideology is not just any world view. Rather, it carries a pejorative meaning and is applied to perspectives promoted in the interests of specific social groups. Ideologies also involve an Us/Them polarization and, typically, positive beliefs about and attitudes towards Us and negative beliefs about and attitudes towards Them. Ideologies, as ways of viewing the world, provide guides for social action and may thus in turn give rise to inequalities and injustices (van Dijk (1998).

Approaches in CDA

CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that uses language as social practice. It tolerates varied approaches. The main theoretical approaches of CDA are:

Social and Historical Approach: Ruth Wodak is the main figure associated with this approach. The approach is based on the tradition of sociolinguistics and ethnography. It emphasizes not only the contextualized nature of discourse within its present state of

occurrence, but also explains the development of discourse through a historical continuum. Wodak developed the sociological and historical method by devoting it to tracing the (intertextual) history of phrases and arguments. The method begins with the studying of original documents augmented by ethnographic research of the past (e.g., interviews with war veterans). It also encompasses wide-ranging data collection and analysis of contemporary news reporting, political discourse, lay beliefs, and discourse. According to Wodak (1996), it is not possible to understand the discursive strategies adopted in any discourse without understanding the historical/social background against which they were created.

Socio-Cognitive Approach: Van Dijk proposes this model as one of the pioneers of CDA. According to van Dijk (2008), there is an agreement among discourse analysts that communicative events should be approached in terms of their immediate constituents: grammatical, stylistic, rhetorical, pragmatic, argumentative, interactional or other related structures. This approach is cognitive oriented as it views that speakers represent their beliefs, intentions, and processes in the production and comprehension of the discourse. It is the social cognition and personal cognition that mediates between society and discourse. Van Dijk (2008:18-19) describes social cognition as "the system of mental representations and processes of group members". In this direction, "ideologies are overall abstract mental systems that organize ...socially shared attitudes". Ideologies thus, "indirectly influence the personal cognition of group members" in their act of comprehension of discourse among other actions and interactions. Van Dijk (1991: 36) views "ideologies" as frameworks that organise sets of attitudes about other elements of the society. Therefore, ideologies are the "cognitive foundation" for the attitudes of various groups in societies. It also serves as an impetus for pursuing their goals and interests. He believes that one who desires to make transparent such an

ideological dichotomy in discourse needs to analyse discourse in the following way:

- a. Examining the context of the discourse: historical, political or social background of a conflict and its main participants
- b. Analysing groups, power relations and conflicts involved
- c. Identifying positive and negative opinions about “Us” versus “Them”
- d. Making explicit the presupposed and the implied eg. Examining all formal structure: lexical choice and syntactic structure, in a way that helps to (de)emphasise polarized group opinions.

Social Practice Approach: This model was developed by Norman Fairclough (1989). The approach sees CDA as a method of examining social and cultural modifications that could be employed in protesting against the power and control of the elite groups on the other group or people. Fairclough’s approach is different from both the historical approach and the cognitive approach as its emphasis is on the social aspects. Fairclough (1995) believes that there is a dialectical relationship between language and other social practices. Thus, actual discourse is determined by socially constitute orders of discourse set of conventions associated with social institutions. The research agenda of the approach focuses on language and globalization, contemporary social change, as well as language, education and power. Fairclough’s CDA has been defined as a methodology which is fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. Therefore, through deconstructing society, the aims are critically investigating possible social inequalities as expressed, constituted, legitimized by discursive practices. It analyses competing power interests between groups and individuals within a society by identifying who gains and who loses in specific situations. The

approach also meant to raise awareness on how language can influence the dominance of one group of people over the other.

Theoretical Framework

The analytical framework adopted in this study is the combination of Fairclough's three models (1989) and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1970) due to their close relations in viewing language as socially functional. Both SFG and CDA see language as a primary social resource and both fields view the forms of language (at all levels) as well as the contents as meaningful. Thus, SGF and CDA acknowledge the relation between language and social contexts as dialectical where linguistic 'choices' (register) are governed by the communicative situation (setting) but those choices at the same time define the nature of the communicative event (genre), including the interpersonal relationship between participants.

Methodology

The data for this study were collected from the websites and hard copies of the newspapers. The extracted slogans were selected from 30 offline and online newspapers some of which are business based while others are conventional newspapers.

Data Presentation

In Nigeria, there are over 50 offline and over 100 online newspapers (Nigerianfinder.com). These newspapers use different kinds of slogans which were coined to gain trust from the audience. It is unusual to find a newspaper without a slogan that addresses its identity. This study obtained and analysed twenty nine (29) selected slogans of the major Nigerian newspapers. The analysis focuses on the syntactic choices, lexical choices and other relevant linguistic aspects.

Below is the list of the newspapers and their slogans as used in this paper:

| S/N | The Name of the Newspaper | Slogan |
|-----|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | Dailytrust | The Newspaper You Can Trust |
| 2. | The Punch | The Most Widely Read Newspaper |
| 3. | National Star | We tell it the way it is |
| 4. | The Guardian | Conscience, Nurtured By Truth |
| 5. | The Nation | Truth In Defence Of Freedom |
| 6. | The Sun | Voice Of The Nation |
| 7. | Vanguard | ...Towards A Better Life For The People |
| 8. | The Will | Expanding The National Conversation |
| 9. | The Trumpet | Africans Now Have A Voice... |
| 10. | The Point | The Reference Point For The News |
| 11. | Nigerian Watch | To Inspire, Inform And Entertain |
| 12. | Leadership | Nigeria's Most Influential Newspaper |
| 13. | Business a.m. | Towards more efficient market |
| 14. | New Telegraph | Nigeria's most authoritative newspaper in politics and business |
| 15. | The Abuja Inquirer | The pulse of the city |
| 16. | The Witness | The People's Voice |
| 17. | Business Day | News you can trust |
| 18. | News Direct | ...accurate news from source |
| 19. | Daily Independent | The Most read newspaper among the political and business elite |
| 20. | The Daily Times | The Nigeria daily newspaper of records since 1926 |
| 21. | This Day | Truth & Reason |
| 22. | The Nation | Widest circulating newspaper |
| 23. | Telegraph | Sanctity of Truth |
| 24. | Tribune | Nigeria's most informative newspaper |
| 25. | Blueprint | For Truth and Justice |

| | | |
|-----|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 26. | The Matrix | Knowledge. Power. Future |
| 27. | Platform Times | ...where the truth is undiluted |
| 28. | Sporting Sun | ...Sports at its Best |
| 29. | Business Day | News you can trust |
| 30. | Daily Asset | Truth is Treasure |

Data Analysis

Identity Construction through Syntax

Syntax deals with the studies on how words are combined to form larger grammatical units such as phrases and clauses. In the slogans, the study finds that the newspapers use sentences and phrases particularly noun phrase: a combination of a noun and its modifier(s) to construct 'positive-self'. Similarly, a close observation of the slogans of the newspapers reveals that few newspapers use a sentence as their slogan. These newspapers are

Daily Trust "The Newspaper you can Trust".

National Star "We tell it the way it is;

The Trumpet "Africans now have a voice".

In these slogans as this study observed, they are constructed in declarative and active forms. The Daily Trust and The Trumpet employ the use of auxiliary verbs *can* and *have* to justify the capability of the newspapers in reporting reliable information to the non-present reader. On the other hand, the National Star prefers the use of verbal processes *tell* to postulate the act of "saying" or "reporting" the legitimate job of offering the best information to the public. Therefore, as this study observes the newspapers choose to employ sentence as their slogans in order to encourage the ideal readers to perceive them as truthful sources of information. The use of declarative sentences is meant to enable the reader to form social trust and solidarity with the names of the paper. Another major syntactic aspect of the slogans in the newspapers is the use of phrases. Most of the newspapers employ various types of phrases

such as preposition phrases, Noun phrases, Verb phrases *etc.* such phrases appear as:

Blueprints “for truth and justice”;

Telegraph “Sanctity of Truth”;

This Day “Truth and Reason”;

The Witness “The People’s Voice”;

Sporting Sun “...Sports at its Best”;

The Matrix “Knowledge. Power. Future”.

As Blommaert (2005) establishes, writers or speakers make their social actor ‘to be properly established’ and identities made to be recognised by others. The dominant identity representation in the slogans of the newspapers shows that the phrases contain abstract modifiers that manifest the quality of being *honest, reliable, truthful, reasonable* and *justifiable*. Thus, the slogans are constructed to persuade the non-present reader to believe that the papers are reliable and convincing sources of information. So, newspapers’ slogans are used as vehicles for construction positive self narratives among the media community and the public.

The ideological implication of choosing words such as *trust, widely read* and *telling the news the way it is*; is to differentiate self from others in terms of uniqueness in reporting. Thus, the overall usage of slogans is implicitly carrying technical sense as the words deployed connote common experiences of positive identity. This makes ideal readers to believe and embrace the ideas presented in the papers as true and reliable. In other words, they are meant to persuade the reader to accept the media in general and in isolation as legitimate and credible sources of information. Other persuasive techniques that are implicitly presented include self-analysis; self-eulogy and positive attributes that are tied to the papers to portray uniqueness and ‘positive-self’. Thus, newspapers are creative in constructing their identities to persuade

readers to (implicitly or explicitly) identify their news outlets as truthful sources of information.

Identity Construction through Lexical Choices

Blommaert and Verschuren (1998) observe that, in constructing self-identity, people use ‘others’ identity and other terms of our own categories such as personal expectations, habits and norms. This analysis finds that most of the slogans of the selected newspapers are characterised by the choice of abstract words such as truth, knowledge, power etc. The choice of the words is also meant to dismiss any assumptions of negative identity such as dishonesty, incompetence and laziness. The slogans are embedded with the persuasive elements to win the minds of the non-present readers. The hidden information contained in most of the words that make up the slogans involves the features of positive self-identity where words such as *truth*, *reason*, *trust*, *sanctity*, *accurate*. The choices are characterised by the desire of the media house to compete in the market of the media narratives.

In view of the above, newspapers made careful choices of words to compete with other newspapers. This strategy of identity construction is deployed to win the minds of the ideal readers. The slogans usually prefer simple, positive and abstract words to give easy interpretations of positivity as their trademarks. Another important feature found in the study is the making of overt references to the name of the country Nigeria and the generic word “newspaper”. For instance, *Tribune* “Nigeria’s most informative newspaper”, *New Telegraph* “Nigeria’s most authoritative newspaper in politics and business”, *Daily Times* “The Nigeria daily newspaper of records since 1926” etc. in the above, there is also ideological construction of the overt references of timing and location. They are deployed to implicitly portray the element of patriotism and legitimisation to practise to journalism as well as seeking solidarity from the citizens who are the ideal readers of the papers. Therefore, the

choices of the lexical items in the formation of the slogans are meant to display and maintain affinity to legitimacy, solidarity, patriotism and winning the minds of the audience.

Identity Construction through Pronouns and Naming

According to Fairclough (1989:128) “the use of pronoun to show inequality in a discourse can be achieved through the use of *We*. It is used to speak on behalf of the self, listeners and indeed ‘right-minded’ citizens”. Thus, most of the pronouns used in the slogans of the newspapers are in active form with the use of ‘we’ as subject to refer to the newspaper as a leading actor as in National Star “*We tell it the way it is*”. It is meant to arrogate power to self over others. The slogan of the Daily Trust “*The newspaper you can trust*” also employs the pronoun *you* to refer to the readers; thus, the pronoun is used to persuade the reader through seeking solidarity. Grammatically, the sentences are in active voices with rhetorical use of the pronouns *We* and *you* to persuade the newspapers makes implicit authoritative claims to their legitimacy, capability and authority of ‘doing’ what is best for the reader, the country and the entire humanity. Therefore, newspapers in Nigerian context control and influence the public through the use of language.

In view of the above analyses, ideologically, media houses such newspapers can be regarded as part of social practice, determined by social structures and the reproductive effects they have on the societal structures. The institutional status of the media is that of organizations structured to maintain the legitimate standard of reporting unbiased reports that lead to unified society. In the slogans, the newspapers portray their status of occupying the institutional roles of their practices. This confirms that the newspapers employ linguistic resources to construct institutional identities. They build the identity by projecting themselves as the primary source of information in politics, business, technology, military and many other spheres of life.

Discussion

Fairclough (1989) argues that language is centrally involved in power and struggle for power through its ideological properties. Thus, the implicit representations found in newspapers' slogans are committed towards building identity categories of positive-self and efforts to isolate self from others. Most of the slogans contain abstract words as such *truth, knowledge, justice etc.* to explicitly configure the assumptions, beliefs and values in the mind of the readers. It is an attempt to persuade the mind-sets of ideal readers. The lexical choices involve deliberate deployment of linguistic devices for the purpose of maintaining or building relevance through persuasion. Therefore, slogans' users put forward their identities with the aims of achieving their social goals. Newspapers use slogans as vehicles of persuasion and solidarity through which social goals are achieved. The linguistic resources deployed are mostly meant to portray the magnitude of their truthfulness, focus, knowledge, objectivity and willingness to offer alternative to the audience towards achieving a 'better world'.

However, newspapers' slogans are chained with the implicit assumptions of the institutional roles they occupy in the democratic setting of Nigeria. They set out the slogans to cognitively authenticate their social relationships with the readers to that of legitimate powerful sources of information for the citizens. This qualifies them as institutional power holders in Nigerian context as far reporting, suggesting, protesting and offering of solutions to solve crises and so forth.

In CDA, discourse is an integral aspect of power and control; power is held by both institutions and individuals in contemporary society (Bloor & Bloor 2007). In this context, slogan has become a legitimate powerful tool of obtaining and maintaining power through identity construction. Newspapers as the fourth estate of the realm have the legitimate power to maintain the opportunity of persuading their

readers. In all its ramifications, media slogans, as found in this study, are fundamentally built on positive self-identity representation. All the newspapers deliberately infused linguistic resources to foreground what is to their advantages because there is a deep connection between the identity of the sources of information and the references of the reporter of information.

With regards to ideological implications of the slogans, there are implicit assumptions by the media outlets that the articulation of authority and solidarity in the slogans is socially legitimised by the social structure and the immediate context of the Nigerian nation. Thus, the construction of the social identity of the newspapers is motivated by the power they hold in their social relationship with ideal readers. The social identities projected in the slogans are designed to strengthen the traditional roles of authoritativeness of the newspaper as a form of media. This is exemplified by the structures of the slogans as they are implicitly designed to entail both institutional and social power. As Fowler *et. al.* (1979:2) argue that linguistic structures are used to systematize, transform...to classify and rank people...in order to assert institutional power or personal status. Therefore, the lexical choices in the slogans are implicitly linked with the social and institutional status that the newspapers occupy.

Besides, the method of identity construction deduced from the slogans is that the newspapers portray themselves as powerful voices controlling what the readers should be consumed in the country. By implication, newspapers have the power for the basic semantic and thematic structure of the relevant words as powerful sources that contribute more to the less voiceless who benefit from their positive acts.

Thus, the institutional matrix of the slogan is that of social struggle to maintain power and legitimacy over other social practices. The newspapers structured their slogans aware of the social constraints

of the institutional roles they occupy in Nigeria. In the slogans, verbs that indicate doing (material process) such as *expanding*, *inspire*, *inform* etc. are mainly used to portray the newspapers' expectations towards others. They are deployed to magnify the capability of the papers and acceptability gained from the readers. These lexical choices implicitly indicate the 'superior identity' of influencing their readers on different perspectives. In a nutshell, the ideological basis in the discourse lies on the assumptions about the social identity of the papers in the Nigerian context. There is implicit authority claims with the newspapers as producers of the texts withhold the power to report, express opinions, etc. to Nigerian context.

Therefore, the slogans of the newspapers embody assumptions about the social relationships of the newspapers as 'legitimate sources' of the citizens who share the same philosophy as members of the same country. They are influenced by social context of different events such as historical, social, economic and political factors. It constitutes an attempt to establish a unified stance towards proving the differences of who contributed and who benefitted in the context of media from social, religious, political and historical perspectives.

Findings

This study has been able to come up with the following major findings:

- a. Newspapers are playing significant roles in the media discourse; thus, it provides a space for the Nigerians to be mindful of the legitimate sources of information.
- b. Language mostly English is deployed to construct slogans with new ideologies associated with the media to maintain institutional status.

- c. The dominant linguistic feature employed in the newspapers' slogans (offline and online) in Nigerian context is the construction of positive-self.
- d. The ideological concerns of the newspapers' slogans are to portray their institutional roles of mobilising, persuading, creating awareness, interpreting and promoting policies and opinions to the public. Thus, media outlets have legitimacy of comment on the situation of their society.
- e. The slogans are embedded with ideological creativity whose interpretation requires of the audience's implicit assumptions.
- f. Newspapers use slogans to construct self positive identity to persuade their readers.

Conclusion

In this work, the relation between language and identity has been demonstrated within the context of the media using Fairclough's (1989) and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1970) models of analysis. The study shows that through slogans, media outlets build positive-self. Thus, all newspapers in this study engage in identity construction with the aim of winning public trust through careful choices of lexis that suit the situational and institutional context use of language. In conclusion, this study has established the assertion that struggle for power is determined by the social relationship between social actors and the contexts of institution in which they occur. Therefore, Nigerian newspapers and their ideal readers are partners in many fronts, yet they try to persuade the ideal readers using slogans. The slogans are designed to portray the superior position of the newspapers as the legitimate sources of information. The above observation leads to the conclusion that the newspaper slogans are gamut of social acts of reporting, expressing opinions, interpreting government policies, orienting the public, persuading, cautioning etc.

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