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POSTURE VERB NOMINALISATION IN LĪKPĀKPÁLN 'KONKOMBA'

Abraham Kwesi Bisilki

Abstract

In this paper I, mainly, examine nominal derivation from posture verbs in a little-researched Mabia (Gur) language known as Līkpākpáln (Konkomba). Līkpākpáln is often associated with the Northern Region of Ghana, although it noticeably spreads beyond that. This study dwells on a corpus drawn from both natural discourse and elicitations. With only very minimal theoretical inspirations, the study observes that the morphological as well as the syntactic features of nominalised posture verbs are, largely, compliant of the generally known linguistic characteristics of Līkpākpáln nouns. Thus, the obligatory feature of affixation, simple and non-simple stem types are attested in the derived nominals. The syntactic idiosyncrasy of nominalised posture verbs is, however, their defiance to function as nominal modifiers in NP structure. In nominalisation strategy, I argue that Līkpākpáln posture verb nominalisation sees a preponderant synchronisation of the processes of prefixation and a reduplication of the posture verb base. Another relevant finding of this study is that the figurative uses and meanings of nominals derived from Līkpākpáln posture verbs reinforce the claim in Newman's (2002) socio-cultural domain of the semantic frame for the analysis of postural senses.

Keywords: Posture verb, nominalisation, Līkpākpáln

1. Introduction

This article examines nominal derivation from a sub-lexical category, posture verbs in a less researched linguistic system of Līkpākpáln. The area of posture verb nominalisation has not received specific attention, especially in relation to the indigenous Ghanaian languages.

Līkpākpáln is classified as a Mabia (Gur) language of the Niger-Congo phylum (Naden, 1988: 12-19). It is actively spoken both in the Republics of Ghana and Togo, but the present study is based on data from speakers in Ghana. Simons and Fennig (2017), in Ethnologue: Languages of the world, estimate that Līkpākpáln speakers in Ghana alone number about 831000. Saboba in the Northern Region of Ghana is often cited as the traditional centre of the Bīkpākpáám (the autonym for the people who speak Līkpākpáln) in Ghana. While this may be true, it is also notable that the Bīkpākpáám are found in significant numbers across four other administrative regions of Ghana (see Appendix I: Map of Ghana, showing some districts where Līkpākpáln is spoken). The Nkwanta North and South Districts are among such areas where Līkpākpáln is natively spoken (Bisilki, 2017: 36; Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2014: 4).

The analysis in this study is based mainly on a digitally recorded corpus from spontaneous speech (in several interactional domains), elicitations and observations (both participant and non-participant forms) among Līkpākpáln native speakers in the Nkwanta North. The elicitations were based on stimuli adaptations from Atintono (2013: 185). The stimuli adapted from Atintono (2013)

were also based on the Max Planck Institute's (MPI) picture models for positionals. Data from the preceding sources were cross-validated and augmented through semi-structured interviews with two prolific speakers of Līkpākpáln. With the help of Elan (4.9.4), the recorded utterances were segmented and transcribed for the analysis herein.

In addressing the phenomenon of posture verb nominalisation, the paper is structured into the following main sections: Introduction, motivation for the present study, nominalisation, review of related literature on nominalisation in (Ghanaian) Mabia, the morphology of the noun in Līkpākpáln, posture verbs, the process of posture verb nominalisation in Līkpākpáln, some aspects of the syntax of posture verb derived nominals, deverbal posture verbs vis-à-vis the socio-cultural domain parameter and, then, the conclusion. It must be stated that apart from exploring the purely linguistics of posture verb nominalisation, the section on the socio-cultural domain is envisaged to unearth some of the possibly culture specific extended meanings of the nominalised forms in Līkpākpáln. This will be situated in the socio-cultural domain parameter of the larger semantic frame for postural analysis as proposed by Newman (2002: 1-3).

It is also worth indicating that, although the present study is not into any formalisms, it happens to draw significantly on notions and terminologies from Appah (2003) and Boadi (2016) among others. Data in this paper is mostly represented in the Līnàjùúl dialect as this allows me to more properly leverage on my native speaker competences while being fully wary of any personal biases.

2. The motivation for the present study

Although Līkpākpáln has a considerably significant speaker population, it is, so far, one of the linguistic cultures attracting the least attention from Linguists and the scientific community generally. Most of the basic linguistic properties of Līkpākpáln either remain entirely unknown or under-described. This is well resonated in Schwarz's (2009: 183) remark that knowledge of the grammatical properties of Līkpākpáln is rather small and the need for basic grammatical research into the language is still very high. Apparently, the somewhat scholarly 'neglect' of Līkpākpáln is a shared predicament of the Mabia family of languages being poorly researched, at least, if compared with counterpart language families such as the Kwa of Ghana (Cahill 2007: 5; Naden 1988: 12).

The morphological phenomenon of nominalization has become one of the most familiar topic areas due to the comparatively increasing number of studies delving into the sub-area. Nonetheless, it appears, as available literature suggests, that the process of nominalization in Līkpākpáln is yet to receive a first investigation ever. This reality, possibly, places this article as a pioneering attempt in that direction. Also, although nominalisation has relatively enjoyed a flourishing attention from linguists cross-globally, one rarely finds such studies predominantly focusing on nominal derivation from posture verbs, unlike the case of other deverbal phenomena that receive focus in studies such as Abubakari (in print), Kambon (2012), Kambon, Appah and Duah (2018) and Bodomo et al. (2018). Rather, studies on nominalisation commonly omit examples illustrating posture verb nominalisation. From my observation, any instance one may find illustrating nominal derivation from posture verbs likely describes as an incidental usually situated in general discussions of deverbal phenomena. What is more is that to discover such examples requires that one reads with a keener eye on nominalised posture verbs as an author normally may not draw attention to this. For instance, in Bodomo (1997: 76), the nominalisation

of the Dagaare posture verb element, **zɛɛ** 'to swoop' is cited among a few other verbs generally meant to show the formation of nouns from verbs. (1) is how Bodomo illustrates the nominalisation of **zɛɛ** 'to swoop'.

Zɛɛ →	**zɛɛo/zɛɛbo**	[Dagaare]
'to swoop'	'the act of swooping'	

Again, Appah (2003) is entirely dedicated to describing nominal derivation in Akan. Appah's analysis includes a significant chunk on deriving nouns from verbs, but hardly provides any example(s) that identify as nominalised posture verbs. Similarly, Atintono (2013) is quite an extensive inquiry into the semantics and grammar of positional verbs (a term he uses to incorporate posture verbs) in Gurenɛ. Nonetheless, no amount of attention is granted the processes of nominalisation that these verbs can undergo to create nouns either in Gurenɛ or in any other language that he made reference to.

Furthermore, as pointed out by Payne (1997: 224-225) and Appah (2003: 68), languages adopt different strategies in deriving nouns from verbs. These strategies may be lexical, morphological or analytic. The fact that verb→noun derivation is not in a monolithic linguistic operation across languages provides further justification for the exploration of the phenomenon in other linguistic systems like Līkpākpáln which lack any previous study along such lines. As will be discovered in subsequent sections (7.0, 8.0, etc.) of this study, Līkpākpáln tends to exhibit some strikingly unique features in terms of the morphological operations that are required for nominal derivation from posture verbs in particular. I note this unique feature with regard to the predominant synchronisation of the processes of reduplication and affixation that characterise the derivational process.

3. Nominalisation

The term, nominalisation is used interchangeably with nominal derivation and the present study does not intend to discriminate between these terms. Following Appah (2003: 1), one can say that nominalisation refers to the process of forming nouns from lexical items of different form classes as well as from non-lexical categories (including many clause and phrase types). On the part of Bodomo (1997: 76), nominalisation is a process involving the formation of nouns from verbs and adjectives. It appears that the several definitions given to nominalisation in the literature, sometimes, have contextual underpinnings as these definitions may be oriented towards specific languages or theoretical leanings. In respect of nominalisation involving the lexical categories, a noun can be derived from a verb, an adjective or even another noun as in examples (2) and (3) from Appah (2003) and the Līkpākpáln data[1]:

(2)	a	**kekan** →	**a-kenkan**	[Akan]
		'read'	SG-reading	
			'the act of reading'	

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[1] In section 3.0, examples (2a) and (2b) are from Līkpākpáln data while the rest are Akan examples cited from Appah (2003: 46, 49, 65, 70). Throughout the paper, however, tone markings in Līkpākpáln items are based on my native speaker impressionistic determinations and so may not always be as accurate.

	b	**chúú**	→	**n-chúú-m**	**[**Līkpākpáln**]**
		'hold'		CL-hold-CL	
				'the act of holding'	

(3)	a	**kɛseɛ**	→	**ɔ-kɛseɛ**	[Akan]
		'big'		SG-big	
				'the fat one/the prominent one'	

	b	**gbìí**	→	**ń-gbìngbì-n**	[Līkpākpáln]
		'fat'		CL;SG-fat-CL;SG	
				'fatness'	

In (2a-b) we see verb nominalisation while in (3a-b) we find a case of adjective nominalisation. Similarly, in example (4), again, from Appah (2003: 46, 49), non-lexical categories are nominalised as follows:

(4)	a	**ɔ-ko**		**de**	**foro**	**bɔɔ**	→	**ɔ-koforobɔɔ**	[Akan]
		3SG;SBJ-fight.HAB	take	climb	stone			'the mount-climbing warrior'	
		'He climbs hills whilst fighting.'							

	b	**ɔ-be-dzi**		**edziban**	→	**edzibandzi**	[Akan]
		3SG;SBJ-FUT-eat	food			'eating'	
		'S/he will eat'					

(4a) involves the nominalisation of an entire clause whereas (4b) illustrates the nominalisation of a verb phrase (VP). The nominalisation strategies used in (4a) and (4b) are termed as subject dropping and object fronting respectively. Appah (2003: 45) further talks of these strategies as argument structure process with morphological implications. Although I follow the notion of nominal derivation, largely, from Appah (2003), the present analysis concentrates on lexical nominalisation, specifically in a circumscribed sense of how the sub-lexical category of posture verbs are nominalised in Līkpākpáln. That is, this article excludes nominalisable structures that are non-lexical. It is also note-worthy that modelling after Appah's (2003) analysis, this study is solely situated in segmental morphology and does not seek to dabble in any related functions of prosody.

Nominalisation, as the alternative term, *nominal derivation* suggests, is a derivative process. This is to say that to nominalise requires the use of morphological operations and devices that have a derivational function in the particular language concerned. For our present context, the derivational devices are morphemic segments. Just as the concept of nominalisation itself, the notion of *derivational morpheme* has been looked at in somewhat differing senses. For Katamba and Stonham (2006: 49), a derivational morpheme is that which when added to a base, results in a new word of only a different meaning or of a totally varying word class. From the angle of Katamba and Stonham (2006), then, the morphemes *-ness* and *un-* as in *kind-ness* and *un-kind* both classify as derivational affixes. The stance of Thakur (2010: 12) ties up with the view of Katamba and Stonham (2006) when Thakur maintains that derivational morphemes are either class changing or class maintaining. Nevertheless, Boadi (2016: 1) holds that a derivational affix is one which

changes the class distribution of a linguistic form to which it is added. Although Boadi's (2016) definition, probably, relates to Akan, that definition more aptly captures the pattern found with the Līkpākpáln posture verb nominalisation as subsequent sections (6.0,7.0, 8.0, etc.) in this paper will reveal.

4. Review of related literature on nominalisation in Mabia: Some Brief Remarks

Works touching on nominal derivation as relates to the Mabia languages of Ghana are not much of a scarcity. What is very clear, however, is that these studies as will be discussed in the rest of this section do not share focus with the present paper.

One of the studies to mention in relation to nominalisation in the Mabia languages of Ghana is Bodomo's (1997) seminal work, *The structure of Dagaare*. Chapter 8 of this work is devoted to a very cursory discussion of some nominal processes in Dagaare. These processes include nominalisation, compounding and nominal incorporation. While this chapter in itself is of a highly limited length of about three pages or so (pp. 76-79), it does not concentrate on nominal derivation alone as already mentioned. The analysis provided on nominalisation in the referenced context has naturally tended to be scanty in every sense of it. Only a handful of verbs and adjectives are tabulated to illustrate how they are nominalised (Bodomo, 1997: 76). From the few examples provided and from Bodomo's own explicit remarks, the processes of nominalising Dagaare verbs and adjectives remain suffixation and vowel lengthening or diphthongisation. The subject of nominalisation as treated in Bodomo (1997) has a broad affinity with the present analysis in two respects: First, nominalization receives some attention in both contexts. Second, both studies attempt an account on nominalisation in two Mabia languages spoken in Ghana.

On the other hand, the point of departure between these two studies is that whereas the present work solely investigates nominalisation, with specific focus on nominal derivation from posture verbs, Bodomo (1997) neither has any such emphasis nor constitutes any comprehensive representation on nominalisation.

In further exploring related literature, Olawsky (1999) deserves mention. As its title suggests, Olawsky's (1999) work is a grammatical sketch on Dagbani, with emphasis placed on the phonology and morphology of the language. Olawsky (1999) lends some space to nominalisation under what he captions as *derivational morphology*. He focuses on noun and adjective formation in describing derivational morphology in Dagbani, with the latter phenomenon falling out of the interest of the present study. Olawsky (1999) discusses fourteen suffixes and a derivational vowel lengthening as the means of nominal derivation in Dagbani. While the resourcefulness of Olawky's (1999) nominalisation account cannot be underrated, it has tended to represent fewer verbs in that regard. A chunk of the data in his section are weighted more towards noun→ noun derivation and adjective → noun derivation. Again, no posture verb surfaces in his data sets on nominal derivation.

Akanlig-Pare (1999) looks at nominalisation in Buli, an equally Mabia language of northern Ghana. Nonetheless, whilst this tended to be a fairly short paper, it is neither significantly placed on verbal nominalisation nor narrowed to posture verb nominalisation as presently being pursued.

Dakubu (2005) also incorporates an aspect of nominalisation in her study on Dagaare grammar, although this is equally sketchy. Overall, the scope of Dakubu's (2005) section on *derived nouns* barely goes beyond a few examples illustrating how abstract, agentive and instrumental nouns are derived from verbs. What is more of a pertinent issue is that a thorough

gleaning of her examples does not show the inclusion of any posture verb element or how it is nominalised. That much, Dakubu (2005) hardly caters for the goal(s) of the present study.

A most recent and equally closest analyses to the present study include Abubakari (in press) and Bodomo et al. (2018), which concentrate on predicate clefting and serial verb nominalisation respectively. Again, these two studies have no overlap with this paper as they are based on different verb typologies other than postures verbs. The two do not also cite any data from Līkpākpáln.

5. The morphology of the Līkpākpáln noun

Līkpākpáln is a noun class language (see Bisilki & Akpanglo-Nartey, 2017; Winkelmann, 2012). Generally, a typical Līkpākpáln noun consists of at least a stem and an affix(es). This is similar to Dagaare and Dagbani nouns (Dakubu, 2005: 42; Olawsky, 1999: 71). A majority of typical nouns in Līkpākpáln cannot occur in the root or stem form alone without an affix. Aside their number function, the affixes are also the basis for the Līkpākpáln noun class assignment. These affixes do not show any regular semantic correlation. A noun stem may have only a prefix or both a prefix and a suffix which must co-occur in its structure. The set of nouns in (5) illustrate the former case as those in (6) show the latter instance:

(5)		Noun (sg)	Noun (pl)
	a	**ù-pìì**	**ì-pìì**
		CL;SG-sheep	CL;PL-sheep
		'sheep'	'many sheep'
	b	**ń-dɔ́ í-dɔ́**	
		CL;SG-stick	CL;PL-stick
		'stick'	'sticks'
	c	**ú-kúlóó**	**í-kúlóó**
		CL;SG-chicken	CL;PL-chicken
		'chicken'	'chickens'

(6)		Noun (sg)	Noun (pl)
	a	**bī-sù-b**	**í-sú-í**
		CL;SG-tree-CL;SG	CL;PL-tree-CL;PL
		'tree'	'trees'
	b	**kī-sáá-k**	**tī-sáá-r**
		CL;SG-farm-CL;SG	CL;PL-farm-CL;PL
		'farm'	'farms'
	c	**ḿ-múú-l**	**í-múú-l**
		CL;SG-rice-CL;SG	CL;PL-rice-CL;PL
		'rice, sg'	'rice, pl'

A deletion of any part of the affixal segments in (6) renders the word element concerned incorrect as in (7). This confirms the requirement that the prefixal and the suffixal parts must go together if the words are to have well-formedness: [2]

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[2] * in front of an item means that the item is an incorrect form.

(7)   a   *** Ø-sù-b**
               Ø-tree-CL;SG
               ('tree')

      b   * **tī-sáá-Ø**
               CL;PL-farm-Ø
               ('farms')

There are also cases where a word in the singular may have both a prefix and a suffix, but may drop one of the two affixes in plural formation. The vice versa of this phenomenon also hold in some cases where a singular noun with only a prefix takes on a suffix in addition when in the plural form. The examples in (8) instantiate this morphological occurrence:

(8)   **Noun (sg)**   **Noun (pl)**
      a   **lī-bíí-l**   **ḿ-bíí**
           CL;SG-breast-CL;SG   CL;PL-breast
           'breast'   'breasts'

      b   **ú-nímpɔ́**   **bī-nímpúú-b**
           CL;SG-woman   CL;PL-woman-CL;PL
           'woman'   'women'

A look at (8a) will reveal that whilst the singular, **lī-bíí-l** 'breast' has both a prefix (li-) and a suffix (-l), the plural version, **ḿ-bíí** has only a prefix (m-). On the other hand, in (8b) the singular, **ú-nímpɔ́** incorporates only a prefix as the plural, **bī-nímpú-b** assumes a suffix in addition. An observation about this affixal behaviour is that the patterns are highly irregular and, thus, difficult to predict.

Again, while it is true, as earlier indicated, that Līkpākpáln nouns typically incorporate affixal segments in their structure, there are other nouns (some of which are obvious loans into the language. (E.g. **lool** from lorry in English) that lack any affix when in singular. This category of nouns constitutes class 1a (Bisilki & Akpanglo-Nartey, 2017: 32). Such nouns are pluralised only by suffixation. The pluralising suffixes in this case, include **-ḿbá** and **-tííb**. The items in (9) provide examples:

(9)   **Noun (sg)**   **Noun (pl)**
      a   **chéchéé**   **chéchéé-ḿbá**
           'bicycle'   bicycle-CL;PL
                              'bicycles'

      b   **lóól**   **lóól-ḿbá**
           'car'   car-CL;PL
                              'cars'

      c   **ná**   **ná-tííb**
           'mother'   mother-CL;PL

'mothers'

-Ḿbá has the variant, **-mám** in some dialects such as Līchábɔl and Līnánkpɛ́l. Again, Bisilki and Akpanglo-Nartey (2017) observes that the distribution of **-tííb** and **-ḿbá/-mám** vary from dialect to dialect. In this regard, the present data and analysis provide a corollary to an earlier observation made by Bisilki and Akpanglo-Nartey (2017) that in Līnàjùúl, **-ḿbá** can non-reciprocally be used to substitute **-tííb** in any noun context as **-tííb** only substitutes **-ḿbá** when the noun involved has -human feature.

As noted by Bodomo (1997: 52), the nominal systems of languages normally include case, number, gender and person. Just as a Mabia language like Dagaare, Līkpākpáln nominals do not have case and person markings. On the issue of gender marking, this study identifies only two suffixes, **-sál** and **-jà**, which can be used to mark the male and the female polars on nouns denoting living things, as and when a speaker deems it necessary. This means that, in Līkpākpáln, nouns denoting both living and noun living things are often rendered without any gender marking. Example (10) shows the use of the preceding gender suffixes (**-sál** and **-jà**,):

(10) a **ú-ŋɔ́-jà**
          CL;SG-goat-male
          'a he goat'
      b **ú-náá-sál**
          CL;SG-cow-female
          'female cow'
      c **ú-sí-jà**
          CL;SG-tree-male
          'tree type'

By the noun stem classification proposed in Appah (2003: 6-7), I observe that a noun stem in Līkpākpáln can be simple, compound or complex. A noun with a simple stem contains only a single stem in its structure while a compound noun stem comprises two stems. On the other hand, a noun containing three or more stems in its morphological form is described as having a complex stem. For purposes of this study, I will further coin the term, *non-simple stem* to subsume both compound and complex stem types. Based on the definitions of the noun stem types, we can say that the stems contained in the Līkpākpáln noun examples cited up to this point are, so far, describable as simple stems. The examples in (11) and (12) consist of compound and complex stems respectively:

(11)	**Noun**	**Prefix(es)**	**Stem**		**Suffix(es)**	**Gloss of compound**
a	**ńtútùn**	**ń-**	**tún,** 'heat'	**tùn** 'heat'	**-ń**	'heat'
b	**ń-yípúán** 'head' 'strong'	**ń-**	**yí,**	**púá**	**-n**	'headstrong'
c	**tīkóókúr**	**tī-**	**kóó,** 'chicken'	**kú** 'feather'	**-r**	'chicken feathers'

	d	**kīgēŋgēŋ**	**kī**		**gēŋ, gēŋ**		'short one'[3]
					'short' 'short'		

(12)	**Noun**	**Prefix(es)**	**Stem**	**Suffix(es)**	**Gloss**
a	**bībɔ´nééŋmáb**	**bī-**	**bɔ´, néé, ŋmɔ´**	**-b**	'name of a clan'
			'dog','intestine''chew'		
b	**līnūmɔ´gál**	**lī-**	**nú, mɔ´, gáá**	**-l**	'type of farm land preparation'
			'yam', 'grass', 'cut'		

What can be observed from (11) and (12) is that a non-simple stem is attained by simply reduplicating the same stem as in (11a/d) or by bringing together entirely different stems as in the rest of the examples. What may be found more intriguing is the fact that the constituents of a non-simple stem may underlyingly belong to different lexical categories. A case in point is **līnūmɔ´gál** 'type of farm land preparation' in (12b) which consists of **līnúúl** 'yam', **tīmóór** 'grass' and **gáá** 'to cut'. The structure of this non-simple stem can be given as N + N +V. Once any permissible combination of stems is brought together, an appropriate nominalising affix(es) is attached to it to seal its nounness. These affixes, as already pointed out, also have class and number functions in the noun.

Another observation worth attention is that, with the exception of class 1a nominals, a noun in Līkpākpáln cannot stand independently without any affix(es) attached to it. This condition holds for both simple and non-simple stem nouns. Against this background, a claim can be put forth that most Līkpākpáln nouns have bound roots or stems. In the light of this, we can further say that the presence or absence of an affix in a word will be an important criterion for measuring the nounness possibility of that word. The foregoing claim that Līkpākpáln nouns consist of bound roots/stems is substantiated by the data in (13), which is supposed to be a repetition of the singular nouns in (5):

(13) a ***Ø-pìì**
Ø-sheep
('sheep')

b *** Ø-dɔ´**
Ø-stick
('stick')

c ***Ø-kúlóó**
Ø-chicken
('chicken')

A final remark to add on this section concerning the structure of the Līkpākpáln noun as a lexical category is that the interesting choice of affixes for various nouns could have phonological

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[3] The full form of the stems in (11b) are līyíl 'head' and púá 'be strong'. In (11c) the full forms are úkúlóó 'chicken' and tīkúr 'feathers'. The full forms in (12a) are úbɔ´ 'dog', tīnéér 'intestines' and ŋmɔ´ 'to chew'.

motivations, but which question currently lies beyond the reach of this paper and will require a full-scale inquiry.

6. Posture verbs

In Ameka and Levinson (2007), posture verbs come under the cover term, locative verbs or locative constructions as in other studies. Nonetheless, as observed by Atintono (2013: 25), several other alternative terms used with slightly varying or in the overlapping sense exist in the literature. Such terms include: verbs of posture, verbs of body position, positional verbs, positional verbs of spatial location, etc.

The proliferation of tags in relation to locative verbs is possibly because, in many languages, this family of verbs tends to cover a broad semantic range that can further be subjected to sub-groupings. For instance, it is found that in Gurenɛ, locative construction sub-delineates into six types, namely, verbs of body position or posture, elevation verbs, attachment verbs, distribution verbs, general locative verbs and proximate or propinquity verbs (Atintono, 2013: 25).

Taking a cue from Atintono (2013: 24), a posture verb is here considered as a verb which semantically codes the static assumed body position or posture of animate entities. In other words, posture verbs are a sub-class of predicates that describe the different body positions or postures of humans and animals. It is in the preceding sense that the terms posture verb and verb of posture will often be employed synonymously in the present study. The forms **tui** 'to stand' and **eno** 'to lie down' are cited as examples of posture verbs from Manam (an Austronesian language) (Newman, 2002: 5). Similarly, **zɪ** 'be in a sitting posture' and **kpa** 'be kneeling' are mentioned as examples of posture verbs in Gurenɛ (Atintono, 2013: 29).

Seven Līkpākpáln verbs of posture: **sìl** 'to be standing' **kál** 'to be in a sitting position' **gbáán** 'to be kneeling', **bóón** 'to be in a stooping posture', **dóón** 'to be in a lying body posture', **dìn** 'to be leaning against something' and **sóón** 'to be in a squatting position' will be covered in this study. In a classification paradigm of Welmers (1973: 344) which typologises verbs into primary and auxiliary verbs, Līkpākpáln verbs of posture can be placed under primary verbs as they consist of single bases and do not construct with any auxiliaries in their basic structure.

Līkpākpáln posture verbs are essentially intransitive in the basic sense that they do not require objects or direct object arguments. However, as occurs in Tongan (Austronesian), Swahili (Niger-Kordofanian) and Cantonese (Newman, 2002), a posture verb in Līkpākpáln may take a locative complement as shown in (14a-b):

(14) a   **Kánjɔ́**   **kál**   **lī-jà-l**   **bɔ́**
            Kánjɔ́   sit.PFV   CL;SG-chair-CL;SG   on
            'Kánjɔ́ sat on a chair'

      b   **Kánjɔ́**   **dóón**   *kītìŋ*
            Kánjɔ́   lie.PFV   ground
            'Kánjɔ́ lay on the ground'

In (14a-b), we find the posture verbs taking the italicised locative complements or phrases, ***lī-jà-l bɔ́*** 'on a chair' and ***kītìŋ*** 'on the ground'. As reflected in the Līkpākpáln data in (14) above and as noted by Newman (2002), a locative complement may incorporate an adpositional, also sometimes

referred to as the locative suffix or the locative preposition. In different languages, varying parameters determine whether or not the locative preposition can be omitted. In Tongan, the locative becomes optional in casual speech whereas in Swahili it may be omitted when the location phrase has specific reference. For instance, the Swahili sentences in (15) illustrate location phrases with or without a locative preposition. Similarly, the Tongan example in (16) indicates the optionality of the bracketed adposition:

(15)　a　**Juma　a-li-kaa　　kiti-ni**
　　　　　Juma　he-PAST-sit　chair-LOC
　　　　　'Juma sat on a/the chair'

　　　b　**Juma　a-li-kaa　　　　　　kiti　hiki**
　　　　　Juma　he-PAST-sit　　　　　chair　this
　　　　　'Juma sat on this chair'
　　　　　(Newman, 2002: 5)

(16)　**Oku　tangutu'a　　Mele　('i)　he　　sea**
　　　　PRES　sit　　　　　ABS　Mele　LOC　ART　chair
　　　　'Mele is sitting on a chair'
　　　　(Newman, 2002: 5).

The idiosyncrasy of Līkpākpáln with respect to the use of the locative preposition is that its presence or absence may not necessarily be optional, but contingent upon the landmark[4] or the posture verb involved. For example, when **kītìŋ** 'ground/land' is the landmark, no locative preposition is required in the locative complement. In a similar way, the use of the posture verb, **dìn** excludes an adposition in a following locative complement. (17a-b) provide examples to the preceding observations:

(17)　a　**Ú-bú　　　dɔ́　　　　kītìŋ**
　　　　　CL;SG-child　lie.IPFV　　　ground
　　　　　'A/the child is lying on the ground'

　　　b　**Ú-kpán　　　　dìn　　　　　bī-sù-b**
　　　　　CL;SG-hunter　　lean.PFV　　　CL;SG-tree-CL;SG
　　　　　'A/the hunter leaned against a tree'

The sentences in (17) will become semantically and/or grammatically weird if adpositions are introduced in the constructions as in (18a-b):

(18)　a　***Ú-bú dɔ́　kītìŋ　bɔ́**
　　　　　CL;SG-child　lie.IPFV　　　ground　　　　on
　　　　　'A/the child is lying on the ground'

---

[4] In locative constructions, the ground/landmark refers to the point or place where the object is located whilst the term, figure/trajectory is used to refer to the object that is located (Atintono, 2013; Talmy, 2007: 70).

b   ***Ú-kpán**   **dìn**   **_bī-sù-b_**   **_bɔ́_**
            CL;SG-hunter   lean.PFV   CL;SG-tree-CL;SG   on
            'A/the leaned against a tree'

Again, with the exception of **dìn** 'to be leaning against something', all the other Līkpākpáln posture verbs discussed in the present analysis can occur in a sentence without a following locative complement as exemplified in (19):

(19)   a   **Ú-bú**   **dɔ́**
            CL;SG-child   lie.IPFV
            'The child is lying (on something).'

       b   **Mánótī**   **sóón**
            Mánótī   squat.PFV
            'Mánótī squatted.'

       c   **Ú-nìmpū**   **gbáán**
            CL;SG-woman   kneel.PFV
            'A woman knelt down.'

A posture verb can optionally be reduplicated to achieve a plural meaning and agreement with an appropriate subject. The examples in (20) demonstrate the pluralisation of Līkpākpáln verbs of posture through reduplication:

(20)   a   **Bī-nìmpúú-b**   **bóbóó**   **lī-chìn-l**
            CL;PL-woman-CL;PL   stoop.IPFV   CL;SG-compound-CL;SG
            'Women are stooping in the house.'

       b   **Bī-yáá-b**   **dɔ́dɔ́**   **kī-díí-k**   **nē**
            CL;PL-child-CL;PL   lie.IPFV   CL;SG-room-CL;SG in
            'Children are lying in the house.'

       c   **Bī-nìnkpíí-b**   **káká**   **lī-kpū-nàmpà-l**
            CL;PL-elder-CL;PL   sit.IPFV   CL;SG-funeral-house-CL;SG
            'Elders are sitting at the funeral house/ground.'

As can be seen from (20a-c), there is the option for a posture verb to be reduplicated for a plural effect when the subject argument has reference to two or more persons or entities. In this case, the posture verb can semantically be conceived as having a focus on the individual postures of the persons or entities involved. However, the non-reduplicated form of posture verbs is found to be more often used with plural subjects than the reduplicated forms are.

      Affixation is not a productive means of tense, aspectual or mood marking in Līkpākpáln posture verbs. Rather, non-concatenative processes such as vowel alternation and tone play a more

active role in encoding other grammatical information in the posture verbs. The examples involving **dóón** 'to be in a lying body position' in (21a-c) is a case in point:

(21)   a   **Chákún**   **dòò**   **lī-jà-l tààb**
           Cat   lie.HAB   CL;SG-chair-CL;SG under
           A/the cat lies under a chair.'

       b   **Mákīnyì**   **dóón**   **kī-káampéé-k**   **bɔ́**
           Mákīnyì   lie.PFV   CL;SG-mat-CL;SG   on
           'Mákīnyì lay on the mat.'

       c   **Chákún**   **dɔ́**   **lī-jà-l**   **tààb**
           A/the cat   lie.IPFV   CL;SG-chair-CL;SG under
           'The cat is lying under the chair.'

The non-segmental representation of some aspects of grammatical information in Līkpākpáln posture verbs has semblance with the non-use of segmentals for the habitual and continuative aspectuals in Akan (Appah, 2003: 40).

7. The process of posture verb nominalisation in Līkpākpáln

Nominal derivation from Līkpākpáln posture verbs generally follows a concatenative process. This involves prefixation and reduplication. Among the seven posture verbs covered in this analysis, only two, namely, **gbáán** 'to be in a kneeling posture' and **dìn** 'to be leaning against something' were found to be nominalisable through only prefixation. To nominalise any of the other posture verbs requires the simultaneous processes of prefixation and reduplication of the verb base. The prefixal element involved, which I term as a nominalising prefix, is identified as **N-/M-** Hence, one can formulate a rule for the nominalisation of posture verbs as: N/M_{prefix} + $V_{\pm reduplication}$ = Derived Nominal. Adopting the stance of Appah (2005 :132) and Payne (1997), the derived nominals, in this case, can be described as action nominals as they essentially refer to the action designated by the posture verb. Table 1 below shows the posture verbs and their corresponding nominalised outputs:

Table 1: Līkpākpáln posture verbs and their corresponding nominalised forms [5]

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[5] The final nasals, /m/ and /n/ in the words in table 1 are orthographic representations of nasalized vowels in the words.

No.	Posture verb	Nominalised form	English gloss of nominalised form
1	sìl	Ń-sìsíí	The act of being in a standing posture
2	kál	Ń-kákáá	The act of being in a sitting posture
3	gbáán	Ń-gbáám	The act of being in a kneeling posture
4	bóón	Ḿ-bóbóó	The act of being in a stooping posture
5	dóón	Ń-dódóó	The act of being in a lying posture
6	dìn	Ń-dìm	The act of leaning against something
7	sóón	Ń-sósóó	The act of being in a squatting posture

From table 1, it can be observed that apart from 3 and 6, the nominalised forms of the rest of the posture verbs show evidence of total reduplication. The reduplication gives these nominalised forms compound stems. This agrees with the Līkpākpáln nominal structure in (11) under section 5.0. On the other hand, the non-reduplicated stems in 3 and 6 of table 1 are instances of simple stem nouns. Again, as typical of Līkpākpáln nouns, each of the derived nominals is necessarily attached with an appropriate prefix, N-/M-. This prefix generally marks class and number (singular) in nominals. Nevertheless, since the nominals derived from posture verbs cannot properly be described as countable nouns, the N-/M prefix may not (in this case) be marking number per se, but proffer evidence to the nounness of the derived forms. The non-number effect of the prefixal allomorphs in Līkpākpáln deverbal posture verbs can be assumed to have a typological symmetry in Dagbani where derivative affixes commonly do not attest to number (Olawsky, 1999: 102). Also, the use of affixation in the nominalisation of Līkpākpáln posture verbs ties up with the phenomenon of action nominalisation in Akan, except that in Akan there is also the option where some action nominals are derived through the use of a zero operator (Appah, 2005: 133).

8. Some aspects of the syntax of the derived nominals

This section takes a cursory look at some aspects of the syntactic behaviour of deverbal posture verbs in Līkpākpáln. These include their argument functions, occurrence with modifiers and in possessive constructions.

8.1 Subject and object positions

Nominals derived from posture verbs can take both subject and object argument positions in sentence structures. The sentences in (22a-b) illustrate deverbal posture verbs in subject and object positions:

(22) a   *Ń-sìsíí*   **wù**   **kīcháŋ**
             CL;SG-standing   pain.HAB   waist
             'Standing causes waist pain.'

      b   **Bī-kpáá-b**   **láá**   *ḿ-bóbóó*
             CL;PL-farmer-CL;PL   like.HAB   CL;SG-stooping
             'Farmers like stooping.'

In examples (22a) and (22b), the derived nominals in italics are subject and object arguments respectively.

8.2 Occurrence with other modifiers in a noun phrase

      A deverbal posture verb as head of a noun phrase can be modified by adjectives, adverbials (intensifiers) and nominal modifiers. (23a-c) give examples of these instances:

(23) a   *Ń-sìsíí*   *nyáán* **nká** **tī**   **bán**
             CL;SG-standing   good   FOC   we   want.IPFV
             'A GOOD POSITION/STATUS is what we want.'

      b   *Ń-kákáá*   *búnbún*   **káá-ŋán**
             CL;SG-sitting   much   NEG-good
             'Too much of sitting is not good.'

      c   **Tī-nyóór**   **bī**   *ń-kpáá-bóbóó*   **nē**
             CL-profit   be   CL;SG-farmer-stooping   in
             'There is profit/benefit in farmers' stooping.'

From examples (23a), (23b) and (23c) we find NPs in which the derived nominal heads are modified by an adjective, an adverbial (intensifier) and a nominal modifier respectively. It is also observed as in (23a-c) that while other modifier categories are postposed to the derived nominal head, the nominal modifier is preposed to it. This is compliant of the order of modification observed in Līkpākpáln (see Bisilki, 2018). It is also important to add that a derived nominal may retain a literal meaning or assume an idiomatic one as in (23a). However, while it is possible for a deverbal posture verb to take a nominal modifier, it does not seem possible for a nominal derived from a posture verb to serve as a nominal modifier to another noun in an NP structure. This accounts for the incorrectness of the structures in (24a-b):

(24) a   ***Tī-nyóór**   **bī**   ***ḿ-bóbóó-kpáá***   **nē**
            CL-profit   be   CL;SG-farmer-stooping   in
            ('There is profit/benefit in farmers' stooping.')

      b   ***Nákújà**   **sóó**   ***ń-sósóó-nímpú***
            Nákújà   be.squatting   CL;SG-squatting-woman
            ('Nákújà is squatting like a woman')

8.3 The derived nominals in possessive constructions

Nominals derived from posture verbs can be used in adnominal possessive constructions. This is exemplified in (25a-b):

(25) a   ***Sòjà-tííb***   ***áá-sìsíí***   **púá**   **pám**
            Soldier-CL;PL   POSS-standing   be.difficult   INTENS
            'The military type of standing is very difficult.'

      b   **Bī-kpáá-b**   **kán**   ***ḿ-bóbóó***   ***áá-nyóór***
            CL;PL-farmer-CL;PL   see.HAB   CL;SG-stooping   POSS-profit
            'Farmers benefit/profit from stooping.'

In (25a), the derived nominal, **ńsìsíí** 'to be in standing posture' is the possessum in the possessive construction whereas in (25b), the derived nominal, **ḿ-bóbóó** 'to be in a stooping posture' is the possessor in the possessive construction.

9. Nominalised posture verbs vis-à-vis the socio-cultural domain parameter

Newman (2002: 2) points out that the central meanings of posture verbs are their literal interpretations, also known as their postural senses. From this point of view, the central meanings of posture verbs will include such as the actual acts of standing, sitting, kneeling, etc. Beyond these central meanings, it is also widely attested that posture verbs come to acquire figurative, grammaticalised or semantic extensions in terms of their meanings or interpretations in languages. It is argued that postures play an important role in our human daily routines, hence, the verbs denoting these postures come to be common sources of semantic extensions (Atintono, 2012; Newman, 2002). I will, additionally, adopt the term connotation or associative meaning in a synonymous use with the figurative or semantic extensions of nominalised posture verbs.

In analysing the semantic components of posture verbs, Newman (2002: 2) establishes four domains as constituting the semantic frame within which the semantic properties of posture verbs can be analysed. These include the spatio-temporal domain, the force dynamics domain, the active zone domain and the socio-cultural domain. Zeroing in on the socio-cultural domain, one can say that this domain has to do with the world views or social evaluations held by the speakers of a language about a particular posture. These world views or social evaluations which underlie the semantic extensions or connotative meanings of postures are, in turn, influenced by cultural factors (see Atintono, 2013: 157; Song, 2002). Whereas this section does not claim to be an exhaustive account on the figurative usage of posture verbs or their nominalised outputs in Līkpākpáln, it does

provide some key highlights on the subject.

In the Bīkpākpáám linguistic culture, a nominalised posture verb may have a couple of figurative meanings simultaneously. For instance, beyond the denotative meaning of the nominalised form, **ń-dódóó** 'the act of being in a lying posture', it has other figurative uses where it could mean accommodation/shelter, sexual intercourse, a condition of sickness and a place of burial. The examples in (26a-c) provide some illustrations:

(26) a **Ú-nìnjà**   **sán**   **ké**   **áá-lī-kpá**   **áá-bá**   *áá-dódóón*
    CL;SG-man   must   CONN   2SG-AUX-have   your-self   POSS-lying
    'A man must have his own sleeping place/accommodation.'

b   *Ń-dódóó*   **áá-bɔ́r**   **ńjáán**   **Máálán**   **nē**   **ú-púú**
    CL;SG-lying   POSS-matter   be.disagreement   Máálán   CONJ   POSS-wife
    'Sexual affair is the cause of the contention between Máálán and his wife.'

c   **Bī-ná**   **nīn-dɔ́**   *ń-dódóó*   **ŋìn**   **yá**   **káá-ŋán**
    3PL;POSS-mother   be-lying   CL;SG-lying   REL   DEF   NEG-good
    'Their sick mother's condition is very bad.'

In (26a), the interactants were a youth (a young man) and his paternal uncle. The young man discloses to his paternal uncle his intention to put up a room for himself. The uncle's response represents the statement in (26a) where we see the word, **ń-dódóó** 'sleeping place' taking a non-literal meaning. Similarly, in (26b) and (26c), **ń-dódóó** assumes the figurative meanings of mating between male and female and sickness respectively.[6] It has been argued that in many socio-cultural groups, the lying posture is adjudged as the least involving physical action among the body postures. As such, the lying posture has generally been associated with rest, sleep, sickness and death (Newman, 2002: 3; Atintono, 2013: 157). This generic observation about the lying posture resonates with the figurative senses of **ń-dódóó** in Līkpākpáln as shown in the preceding discussion. Perhaps, something more to add, based on the Līkpākpáln data, is that these associated meanings are, more properly, metaphorical extensions or associations. For example, the figurative interpretation of **ń-dódóó** as accommodation/shelter and sickness in (26a) is metaphorical in the sense that one's place of accommodation is where one lies down to sleep or rest. Similarly, a time of sickness is usually when the body resorts to the lying posture most.

The non-literal use of one of the posture verbs and its nominalised output was found to always have a pejorative or disparaging meaning among Līkpākpáln speakers. This is the posture verb form, **sóó** 'to be in a squatting posture' and its nominalised form, **ń-sósóó** 'the act of being in a squatting posture'. **Sóó** or **ń-sósóó** in figurative usage does not normally have a specific meaning. Nonetheless, employing any of the two forms in reference or address to a person expresses contempt or belittlement of the highest order towards the fellow, except in the context of a jest. The deprecatory meaning given to the non-literal usage of **sóó** and **ń-sósóó** follows from the

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The contextual background of (26b) is that a husband returns from the farm and then enquires from his wife the cause of a quarrel that ensued the previous night between a couple in the neighbourhood. The wife's response is the utterance represented in (26b). (26c) is an extract from a conversation between two co-wives about a young man who hurries to by-pass them without greeting. One of the co-wives finds the young man's conduct unusual/inappropriate and complains to her counterpart. The counterpart who already knew that the young man's mother was seriously ill at the time responds as represented in (26c), probably, to get the young man as a victim of circumstances pardoned/exonerated.

Bīkpākpáám cultural association of the squatting posture with a lack of independence/self-reliance and dignity.

Additionally, what seems more intriguing about the figurative uses and meanings of nominalised posture verbs in Līkpākpáln is that they are fairly fixed rather than being open ended. Thus, no additional meanings are easily added to the repertoire of figurative meanings of nominalised posture verbs.

10. Conclusion

This study has discussed the phenomenon of nominal derivation from posture verbs in the less-studied Līkpākpáln linguistic culture, using data from both naturalistic and elicitation sources. In the analysis, I considered the morphology of posture verbs, the processes of their nominalisation, some aspects of their syntax and also an overview of their figurative or idiomatic usage vis-à-vis the socio-cultural domain hypothesis of Newman (2002). I establish, inter alia, that the nominalisation of posture verbs in Līkpākpáln is, preponderantly, a synchronisation of the processes of prefixation and reduplication. I also observe that the syntactic characterisation of nominalised posture verbs, largely, complies with those of other nouns in Līkpākpáln, except their (nominalised posture verbs') defiance to function as nominal modifiers in the NP. Also, agreeably, the extended meanings of nominalised posture verbs in Līkpākpáln are impinged by the socio-cultural views of the speakers. This is, therefore, a further vindication of the socio-cultural domain of Newman's (2002) semantic frame for the analysis of posturals.
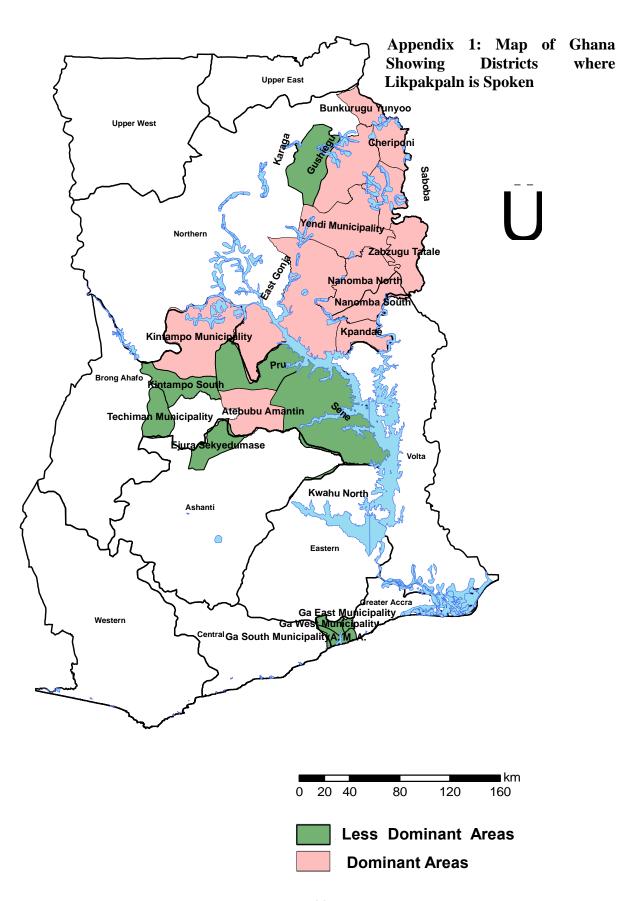
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Abbreviations

ABS	Absolutive	PFV	Perfective
ART	Article	PL	Plural
AUX	Auxiliary	POSS	Possessive
CL	(Noun) class	PRES	Present
COND	Conditional marker	PRF	Perfect
CONJ	Conjunction	PROG	Progressive
CONN	Connective	PRS	Present
DEF	Definite	REL	Relative
DEM	Demonstrative	SBJ	Subject
FOC	Focus marker	SG	Singular
FUT	Future	V	Verb
HAB	Habitual	VP	Verb phrase
INTENS	Intensifier	1	1st Person
IPFV	Imperfective	2	2nd Person
LOC	Locative	3	3rd Person
N	Noun		
NP	Noun phrase		
OBJ	Object		

Appendix 1: Map of Ghana Showing Districts where Likpakpaln is Spoken

Upper East

Upper West

Bunkurugu Yunyoo

Karaga

Gushiegu

Cheriponi

Saboba

Northern

Yendi Municipality

Zabzugu Tatale

East Gonja

Nanomba North

Nanomba South

Kintampo Municipality

Kpandae

Pru

Brong Ahafo

Kintampo South

Sene

Techiman Municipality

Atebubu Amantin

Ejura Sekyedumase

Volta

Kwahu North

Ashanti

Eastern

Western

Greater Accra

Ga East Municipality

Ga West Municipality

Central Ga South Municipality A. M. A.

Ū

km
0 20 40   80   120   160

Less Dominant Areas

Dominant Areas

22

MARKING EXHAUSTIVITY IN DAGBANI

Abdul-Razak Inusah
Edward Salifu Mahama

Abstract

The paper examines the semantics of the so-called focus particle ko as an exhaustive focus marker which expresses exhaustive identification in Dagbani, a Gur language spoken in Ghana. The paper argues that ko expresses exhaustivity in both in situ and ex situ when it occurs in a focus sentence. The paper explores ko as an operator expressing exhaustive focus on constituents and examines exhaustivity of ko as a pragmatic inference giving specific meaning to it. It shows that the particle only occurs in exhaustive focus environments in the language and focuses on both non-subject constituents and subject constituents. The paper argues that Dagbani expresses exhaustive identification in ex-situ and in-situ with evidence to show that the construction of Dagbani is established as monoclausal. The available data show that ko exhaustively marks objects constituents in post-verbal position and subjects in pre-verbal position. Finally, it shows that ko can co-occur with the Dagbani focus markers [ka, n, la] in ex-situ. The paper employs standard tests for exhaustivity using mainly Kiss's (1998) and test of exhaustivity developed by Szabolcsi (1981).

Keywords: Focus marker, Dagbani, ex-situ, exhaustivity, ko

1. Introduction

The general notion of focus as notional category in language that interacts with grammar refers to the part of the clause that provides the most relevant or most salient information in a given discourse situation. Olawsky (1999), Hudu (2006) and Issah (2008, 2013a, 2013b) have identified and analysed the particles ka, n, and la as focus markers in Dagbani. However, the particle *ko* which expresses exhaustivity has not been identified as a focus marker in Dagbani. This paper argues that ko is an exhaustive focus marker that expresses exhaustivity when it occurs in both in situ and ex situ environments.

The choice between ka and n has been argued to be dependent on the grammatical role of the constituent that is to be moved to the left periphery position (Fiedler and Schwarz 2004, 2005; Hudu 2006; Issah 2008). Issah (2008) confirms that this asymmetry

holds only for simple clauses. The particle ko does not depend on the grammatical role of the constituent that is to be moved to the left periphery position; it marks positions with different grammatical and thematic roles. It exhaustively marks objects and other constituents that are in post-verbal position, and exhaustively marks the subject in pre-verbal position. The examples presented in (1) shows both SF, and NSF marking. Note that the perfective marker becomes zero in a sentence when it has an object or when the verb is followed by a focus marker.

(1) a. **Ali**   **ʧaŋ-∅**   **ʃikʊrʊ**
         Ali   go.pef   school
         'Ali went to school.'

     b. **Ali**   **ko**   **n**   **ʧaŋ-∅**   **ʃikʊrʊ**
         Ali   part   1sg   go.pef   school
         'Ali went to school.'

     c. **Ali**   **ʧaŋ-∅**   **ʃikʊrʊ**   **ko**
         Ali   go.pef   school   part
         'Ali went to school.'

It is noticed in the example in (1) that ko can exhaustively mark object constituents in post-verbal position as in (1c), and exhaustively mark the subject in pre-verbal as in (1b). The examples also express exhaustive identification focus in (1b and 1c); and mere informational focus in (1a). Issah (2008) observes that though the exhaustively marked constituents in Dagbani are translated as clefts in English, it is done for the purpose of achieving naturalness in the reading of those sentences in English. In this paper, the exhaustively marked constituents will be translated as monoclausal as in (1b & 1b). The paper looks at whether ko is an exhaustive particle in Dagbani that expresses exhaustivity in both ex situ and in situ focus marking. It is observed that the marker always expresses exhaustivity when it occurs in focused environments. This claim is demonstrated by applying Kiss's (1998) standard tests for exhaustivity to ko focus constructions and the results show that this particle only occurs in exhaustive focus environments in the language.

The paper is organized in five (5) sections. Section 1.1 presents a brief description of Dagbani speakers; section 2 presents methodology and focus marking in Dagbani. Section 3 discusses ko as Dagbani exhaustive focus marker; Section 4 looks at application of some tests on exhaustivity to show that ko is an exhaustive focus marker that expresses exhaustivity and section 5 concludes the paper. to capture certain syntactic alternations in the SVN. Section 5 concludes the paper.

1.1 Dagbani speakers

The study was conducted in Yendi, a native Dagbani settlement and the capital of Dagboŋ kingdom. Native speakers of Dagbani are called Dagbamba.pl or Dagbana.sg. Dagbani is a Gur language that belongs to the Niger-Congo language family and spoken by Dagbamba in the Northern part of Ghana. Dagomba and Dagbani are the forms used by speakers. The geographical area within which Dagbani is spoken is called Dagboŋ. Dagbani has been classified as belonging to the Moore-Gurma sub-group of African languages (Bendor 1971; Greenberg 1963 and Wilson 1970). Though Dagbani has a continuum of dialects, three major dialects stand out: Tomosili, Nayahili and Nanunli; Tomosili is spoken in and around Tamale, Nayahili is spoken in and around Yendi, the seat of the traditional head of Dagboŋ and Nanunli is spoken in and around Bimbila (Inusah 2016, 2017).

2. Methodology

The instrument used for the data collection was an interview guide with people who are native speakers of Dagbani. The data for this paper reflect the pronunciation of the speakers of Nayahili 'the eastern dialect' spoken in Yendi and its surrounding villages. The approach used was qualitative. The key informants were put in conventional contexts that obliged them to use specific words and phrases leading to the collection of the primary data in the study. The secondary data were collected from written text (Karim kundili 2). Both primary and secondary data were cross checked with eleven (11) key informants. The key informants were native speakers of Dagbani (expertise). They were made of six males and five females. The ages of the participants were between 25 and 60 years because I wanted adult participants who were married. Though Dagbani is a tonal language, tone is not marked in this paper.

2.1. Focus Marking in Dagbani

Previous accounts of focus marking in Dagbani (Olawsky 1999; Hudu 2006 and Issah 2008, 2013a, 2013b) show that Dagbani marks focus morphologically by means of the particles ka, n and la. There, however, continue to be diverse views by various researchers as to the role of these various particles in the information structure of the language. Issah (2013a) explains that researchers have really not come to a consensus on the functions of these particles in the information structure of the language. Olawsky (1999) discusses focus marking in Dagbani arguing on the roles of the particles ka, la, and mi as focus markers. The controversy in Dagbani has been the post verbal particle la. Olawsky (1999) describes the particle la as a morpheme with aspectual function that marks habitual as well as a continuous aspect when it is found in between the verb and the object. He uses the data below to buttress his claims:

(2)   a.   **Fati**   **ba**   **la**   **ʧeʧe**
                Fati   ride.imperf   foc   bicycle
                'Fati is riding a bicycle'

      b.   **m**   **bɔhindi**   **la**   **Dagbani.**
                I   learn.imperf   foc   Dagbani
                'I am learning Dagbani.'
                (cf. Olawsky 1999:38)

The particle la in (2) is used as post verbal aspectual morpheme that marks habitual as well as continuous aspect; Olawsky (1999) however points out that the la particle could as well be marking emphasis in the language. Hudu (2006) disagrees with Olawsky and argues that in Dagbani, transitive and intransitive verbs that occur in sentence final positions (i.e. with no overt objects) are obligatorily marked for aspect and so if la is an aspectual marker, it will be expected to occur in such final positions. Issah (2008) also disagrees by noting that Olawsky fails to pin down the constituent within the sentence structure on which la marks focus or emphasis. He explains that la imperfective aspectual function in the language is questionable noting that the aspectual function of la is based on two observations: first, it is possible to have an imperfective reading in Dagbani without the la particle as in (3a) and (3b) and second, it is also possible in Dagbani to have the la particle in the sentence structure of Dagbani without necessarily getting an imperfective reading of that sentence as in (3c) and (3d) illustrated bellow:

3.   a.   **Abu**   **bu- Ø**   **bi-hi**
               Abu   beat-imperf   child-pl
               'Abu is beating children'
      b.   **Ama**   **di-ra**
               Ama   eat-imperf
               'Ama is eating'
      c.   **Ama**   **ku- Ø**   **la**   **bua**
               Ama   kill-perf   Det   goat
               'Ama has killed a goat'
      d.   **bi-hi**   **maa**   **tu- Ø**   **la**   **Abu**
               Child-plu   def   insult-perf   Det   Abu
               The children (have) insulted Abu'
               (Issah 2008:25)

Olawsky further confirms the status of la as a focus marker morpheme in Dagbani rather than aspectual morpheme. Issah (2013b) then concludes that the particle la marks presentational focus on either constituent that follows the verb or on the entire verb phrase, and it is possible to have an imperfective reading in Dagbani without the la particle as

presented in (3a). The paper supports (Hudu 2006) and Issah (2008, 2013b) that the particle la marks presentational focus on either constituent that follows the verb or on the entire verb phrase, and it is possible to have an imperfective reading in Dagbani without the particle.

 Hudu (2006) further discussed ka and n as focus markers in Dagbani. He argues that ka focuses post-verbal constituents by pre-posing them into initial position and forming a cleft construction in what he calls "sentence initial position (ex situ)" and explains that n focuses the noun phrase or emphatic pronoun in subject position producing a cleft construction and differs from ka only in that no overt surface movement is involved. He presented the following data to back his claim:

(4) a. **Amina** **ʧaŋ-Ø** **daa**   **ni**
    Amina   go-perf   market   loc
    'Amina went to the market.'
  b. **Amina** **n** **ʧaŋ-Ø** **daa**   **ni**
    Amina   1sg go-perf market   loc
    'It is Amina who went to the market.'
  c. **n** **zaŋ-Ø**   **Amina**   **na**
    1sg take-perf Amina   loc
    'I brought Amina.'
  d. **Amina** **ka** **n** **zaŋ-Ø**   **na**
    Amina   foc 1sg take-perf loc
    'It is Amina that I brought (not Adam)'
    (Hudu 2006:19)

The data show ka focusing the object (NSF) in (4d) by pre-posing it into initial position forming a cleft construction and (4c) contains an in situ focus as a simple sentence. (4d) shows that Amina is the only one who went to the market or being brought considering the sentence to be contradicted by any other which has a different referent in place of Amina. The paper agrees with (Hudu 2006) and Issah (2008) that ka is a focus marker but argues that ko is also an exhaustive marker which expresses exhaustive identification when it focuses both subject (SF) and object (NSF) in a sentence. When the two focus particles ka and n co-occur with ko in a sentence, the particle n becomes a resumptive pronoun while ka becomes a relative pronoun. This is illustrated in example (5).

(5) a. **Amina** **ko** **n** **ʧaŋ-Ø** **daa**   **ni.**
    Amina   part 1sg go-perf market   loc
    'Amina went to the market.'
  b. **Amina** **ko** **ka** **n** **zaŋ-Ø**   **na**
    Amina   part rel 1sg take-perf loc
    'It is Amina that I brought. '

	c.	**Amina**	**ko**	**n**	**ʧaŋ-Ø**	**daa**	**ni**	**la**
		Amina	part	1sg	go-perf	market	loc	det

        'Amina went to the market.'

The data in (5a, 5b, 5c) show that ka n or la cannot show exhaustivity when they occur with ko but can be interpreted as deictic discourse particles or and not focus markers. n in (5a) is a resumptive pronoun; ka in (5b) is an RC marker while la in (5c) is a post verbal particle or preverbal that is more of a definite article that encodes familiarity.

Issah (2013a:43) states "the constituent that is marked for contrastive focus must invariably be located within the clause initial position of the sentence with an obligatory introduction of special morphemes called focus markers." He again demonstrates that Dagbani is mainly an ex-situ language, in that its question words are generally located in the sentence-initial position and followed immediately by the appropriate focus marker. Fiedler and Schwarz (2005) in what they call "out-of-focus" encoding posit that there is a structural asymmetry between SF (subject focus) and NSF (non-subject focus) arguing that the canonical SF construction contains a postponed syllabic nasal called "emphatic" by Olwasky (1999). They further argue, using the cleft analysis hypothesis that these constructions are described as biclausal. Though Hudu (2006) also makes the same observation on structural asymmetry between subject and non-subject focus constituents, Issah (2008) observed that the structural asymmetry is not as strict as pointed out and then opined that ex-situ focus constructions in Dagbani must be analysed as monoclausal. These seem to be the case as ko marks focus in monoclausal. The findings agree that Dagbani marks focus morphologically by means of particles in monoclausal.

Kiss (1998:245) argues that "focus is applied in the literature of two syntactically and semantically different types of phenomena which must be kept apart: identificational focus and informational focus." She outlines the difference between the two focus notions that hinges mainly on exhaustivity and movement. She defines contrastive focus semantically as one that represents the value of the variable bound by an abstract operator expressing exhaustive identification, and syntactically as the constituent that acts as an operator moving into scope position and binding a variable. Kiss mentions that situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase potentially hold is identified as the exhaustive subset of the set for which the predicate phrase actually holds and that since some sentences are not marked for it, the focus type is non-obligatory. Hudu (2006) explains that in Dagbani the contrasts with presentational focus is obligatorily expressed in every sentence and marked by a pitch accent. It is expressed by a phrase that conveys new and non- presupposed information without any movement, and that does not express exhaustive identification on given entities. The two focus notions also differ in that whereas presentational focus places no restriction on constituents that mark it, some constituents such as universal quantifiers and also-phrases cannot express contrastive focus.

It has been shown in the literature that ka and n can encode identificational (contrastive) focus on constituents which is located in the clausal left periphery. Both particles involve the movement of the constituent that is in focus to the left periphery position and then following it immediately with ka or n. The difference between these morphemes is that while ka focuses non-subject constituents, n focuses subject constituents. Issah (2008) notes that the choice between ka and n has been argued to be dependent on the grammatical role of the constituent that is to be moved to the left periphery position: Fiedler and Schwarz (2004), Fiedler and Schwarz (2005) and Hudu (2006). It is however shown that this asymmetry holds only for simple clauses since it is possible to focus subject constituents of embedded clauses with ka which otherwise is used to focus-mark only non-subject constituents. Issah (2008) observes that constituents that can be focused via the use of ka are NP objects as in (1b), adjuncts as in (2b), and pronouns as in (3b). These are the categories that can be hosted by the left periphery position of Dagbani. These constituents, however, undergo overt movement to left periphery positions. It is observed that marking of focus using ka always demands an obligatory movement of the focused constituent to sentence initial position. It is noted that ka does not mark focus in-situ but rather it marks focus in ex-situ position.

The paper supports this analysis but makes a stronger case that the exhaustive meaning associated with the particle ko is not an additional meaning but the meaning that is expressing exhaustivity when it occurs in focus sentences. In the next section, we will demonstrate with specific tests that *ko* only expresses a specific kind of focus namely, exhaustive focus and marks identification focus in both subject constituent and object constituent positions. It will also show that Issah's (2008) claim that focus in situ does not show exhaustivity in Dagbani may not be accurate.

3. Marking Exhaustivity in Dagbani

Hudu (2006:13) argues, "the particle *ka* focuses post-verbal constituents by pre-posing them into initial position and forming a cleft construction. Subjects and other preverbal constituents can only be clefted with the use of *n* focus marker. Constituents that can be focused include noun phrases, emphatic pronouns and adjuncts." The data below presents his argument:

(6)   a.   n   zaŋ-∅   Amina   na.
               1sg   take-perf   Amina   loc
               'I brought Amina.'

          b.   Amina   **ka**   n   zaŋ-∅   na
               Amina   foc   1sg   take-perf loc
               'It is Amina that I brought.'

(7)   a.   n   zaŋ-∅   Amina   *ka   na.
               1sg   take-perf   Amina   foc   loc

'I brought Amina.'
b.   n   zaŋ-Ø   Amina   **ko**   na.
     1sg   take-perf   Amina   foc   loc
     'I brought Amina.'
c.   Amina   **ko**   ka   n   zaŋ-Ø   na
     Amina   part   rel   1sg   take.perf   loc
     'It is Amina that I brought.'
     (cf. Hudu 2006: 14)

The data in (6b) explains that the particle *ka* like *n* cannot focus post-verbal constituents in in-situ without clefting but (7) provides an alternative *ko* that can focus post-verbal constituents and preverbal constituent in a monoclausal. The data in (6) also show that one will have to use two different particles *n* to mark SF and *ka* to mark NSF in pre-verbal and post-verbal slots in the language. Issah (2008) mentions that both particles involve the movement of the constituent that is in focus to the left periphery position and then following it immediately with *ka* or *n*. There is a difference between these morphemes: whilst *ka* focuses non-subject constituents, *n* focuses subject constituent. It will be shown that this asymmetry holds only for simple clauses since it is possible to focus subject constituents of simple clauses with *ko* which is also used to focus-mark non-subject constituents and adjuncts as in (7) above. The data below illustrates this claim:

(8)   a.   Ali   da-Ø   nɨmdɨ
       Ali   buy.pef   meat
       'Ali bought meat.'
   b.   Ali   **ko**   n-da-Ø   nɨmdɨ   .
       Ali   part   1sg-buy.pef   meat
       '**Ali** bought the meat.'
   c.   Ali   da-Ø   nɨmdɨ   **ko**
       Ali   buy.pef   meat   part
       'Ali bought the **meat.**'

(9)   a.   **zʊŋɔ**   **ko**   ka   Ali   da-Ø   nɨmdɨ
       today   part   rel   Ali   buy.pef   meat
       'Today, Ali bought meat.'
   b.   **mani**   **ko**   n   da-Ø   nɨmdɨ   maa
       1sg.emph   part   1sg   buy.pef   meat   Det.
       'I only bought the meat.'

The data in (8a) is mere information that contradicts with (8b-c and 9a-b). The data provide the idea that only Ali bought the meat and no one else expressing exhaustive identification in ex situ in (8b-9a-b) and in situ in (8c) in the post verbal focus environment. The example in (9a) shows *ko* focusing the adverb *zuŋɔ* 'today' to mean only today and not

a different day, the particle focus marks on the emphatic pronoun *mani* 'me'. This shows that *ko* can also focus other constituents apart from subjects and objects. While (8b, and 9a-b) show focus exhaustivity in subject ex situ position, (8c) shows focus exhaustivity in object in situ and (8a) shows non-presupposed information. The paper proposes that the particle *ko* also encodes identification focus (exhaustive) and can also mark focus on emphatic pronouns and adjuncts as illustrated in (10):

(10)	a.	**Kpe**	**ko**	ka	o-di	sahim	maa
		loc.	part	rel	3sg.eat.perf	food	Det

'It is **here** that he ate the food.'

	b.	**mani**	**ko**	n	di	sahim	maa
		1sg.emph	part	1sg.	eat.perf	food	Det

'It is **me** who ate the food.'

The data provides an adjunct *kpe* 'here' that is pre-posed and focused in initial position in (10a) and emphatic pronoun *mani* 'me' also focused in (10b). Both sentences in (10) show exhaustivity to mean (here only) and (me and nobody else).

3.1 Ex Situ and in Situ Positions

When a focus marker occurs in the pre-verbal position it is described as ex situ as in example (5b) but when it occurs in a post-verbal slot, it is described as in situ as in (5c). Kiss (1998:246) says, "Presentational focus does not have a unique syntactic position and exhaustivity can only be expressed by a constituent pre-posed into preverbal slot." In other words, all contrastive focus positions must be preverbal while presentational focus positions may occur VP-internally or in situ. This might not be true in Dagbani since the particle *ko* may express exhaustivity in both in situ and ex situ as illustrated in example (11) bellow. Hudu (2006) disagrees with Kiss and confirms that the pattern in Dagbani presents an exception to Kiss' claim of universality of preverbal position for contrastively focused positions.

11.	Q:	ŋʊn	n	be	jili	bili	maa	ni.
		who	1sg	inside	house	small	Det.	loc

'Who is inside the small house?'

	b.	ʤɛngbarɨgɨ	**ko**	n	be	jili	bili	maa	ni.
		mouse	**part**	1sg	inside	house	small	Det.	loc

'The **mouse** is inside the small house.'

	c.	bɛ	ʧe	ʤɛngbarɨgɨ	**ko**	n	nɨŋ	jili	maa	ni.
		3pl.	leave.perf	mouse	**part**	1sg	do	house	Det	loc

'The mouse is left inside the house.'

(cf. Karim kundili 2:45)

The data in (11) show that exhaustivity can be expressed by a constituent pre-posed into preverbal slot as in (11b) as well a post-posed into post-verbal slot in Dagbani as in (11c). This is contrary to Kiss' claim of universality of preverbal position for contrastively focused positions and that exhaustivity can only be expressed by a constituent pre-posed into preverbal slot. In the next section, we will demonstrate with specific tests that *ko* only expresses a specific kind of focus namely, exhaustive focus.

4. The Tests for Exhaustivity: *ko* Focus

In this section, we justify the claim that *ko* is an exhaustive focus marker. This is achieved by using the tests in Kiss (1998). Previous account in Dagbani (Hudu 2006; Issah 2008 2013a) applied the tests in Kiss (1998) to Dagbani data to confirm the status of the particle *ka* and *n* as identificational or contrastive focus markers. Kiss (1998) outlines the difference between the two focus notions that hinges mainly on exhaustivity and movement. Kiss (1998) defines….

> …identificational (exhaustive) focus as a subset of the set of contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold; it is identified as the exhaustive subset of this set for which the predicate phrase actually holds, and information focus as that if a sentence part conveys new, nonpresupposed information without expressing exhaustive identification performed on a set of contextually or situationally given entities, it is a mere information focus (Kiss 1998:246-249)

These tests are employed in this paper to find out if *ko* is an identificational focus marker that expresses exhaustivity. This is achieved by using the tests developed by Szabolsci (1981). The tests employed include: coordination and entailment test, partial answer interpreted as full answer, distributional restrictions on exhaustivity and interpretation

4.1 Coordination and Entailment Test

Duah (2015:10) states that "the coordination test was first used by Szabolsci (1981) to identify exhaustivity of focus in Hungarian." He explains that the test involves a pair of sentences in which one contains two co-ordinate DPs that are focused, and differ from the second in which one of the coordinate DPs is dropped. Here, exhaustivity depends on the lack of logical consequence between the two sentences. The focus expresses exhaustive identification only if the second sentence is not among the logical consequences of the first. When this test is applied to *ko*, it confirms its status as identification focus marker in Dagbani. The following are examples:

(12)   Q: ŋʊn   ɲu   kom   maa?
              who   drink.perf   water   Det
              'Who drank the water?'

        A: **Ali**   **mini** **Ayi** **ko**   n   ɲu-Ø   kom   maa
              Ali   conj   Ayi   part 1sg drink.perf   water Det.
              Ali and Ayi drank the water."

        A1:   **Ali**   **ko**   n   ɲu-Ø   kom   maa.
              Ali   part   1sg   drink.perf   water   Det.
              '**Ali** drank the water.'

        A2:   **Ali**   **n**   ɲu-Ø   kom   maa.
              Ali   foc   drink.perf   water   Det.
              'Ali drank the water.'

        B: **Ali**   **mini** **Ayi** ɲu-Ø   kom   maa
              Ali   conj   Ayi   drink.perf   water Det.
              'Ali and Ayi drank the water.'

        B1:   **bɛ**   ɲu-Ø   kom   maa.
              3pl   drink.perf   water   Det.
              'They drank the water.'

Example (12A) shows that the coordinated NP Ali and Ayi are focused and marked with the particle *ko.* It implies that example (12A1) cannot replace (12A) to answer the question so the two sentences are said to be in complementary distribution. This is because the use of *ko* in (12A) implies that the water was drank by exactly two people (Ali and Ayi) while (12A1) implies that it was drank by only Ali. However, when example (12B) is given as response to the question (Q), example (12B1) or (12A2) may also be used as a partial answer since the sentences do not contradict each other. It is assumed that in the test, the particle *ko* has passed the test of exhaustivity because while (12A) does not entail (12A1), (12B) does entail (12B1) and (12A2) ere *n* is used to focus Ali.

A variation of the coordination test involves focused numerals (see Szabolsci 1981). "In this test, a numeral is added to a noun and focused; where focus is exhaustive the focused entity must be equal in number to the entity in question otherwise the sentence would be contradictory" (Duah 2015:11). For example, in a story, *Ata* 'name', ʤɛnkuno 'cat' and ʤɛngbariga 'mouse' lived in the same house and one day they decided to cook together. In their interaction the extract in (13) was heard:

(13)   Ata, ʤɛnkuno mini ʤɛngbariga to-Ø   sakɔro   mini   sima-ʒɛri
         Ata cat   conj mouse   pound.perf fufu   conj groundnut-soup
         'Ata, cat and mouse pounded fufu and prepared groundnut soup'
         (cf: karimkundili 2:42)

  Q: niriba   a-la   **ko**   n-to   sakɔro   maa?
       People   how.many part 1sg-pound.perf   fufu   Det

'How many people pounded the fufu?'

A:	**niriba**	**ata**	n-to-∅	sakɔro	maa
	people	three	1sg-pound.perf	fufu	Det

'**Three people** pounded the fufu?'

A1*:*	**niriba**	**aji**	n-to	sakɔro	maa
	People	two	1sg.pound.perf	fufu	Det

'**Two people** pounded the fufu?'

B:	**niriba**	**ata**	**ko**	n-to-∅	sakɔro	maa
	People	three	part	1sg.pound.perf.	fufu	Det

'**Three people** pounded the fufu.'

B1:	**niriba**	**aji**	**ko**	n-to-∅	sakɔro	maa
	people	two	part	1sg.pound.perf.	fufu	Det

'**Two people** pounded the fufu?'

The data in (13) is an extract from the written text (Karim kundili 2). It is observed that while (13A) entails (13A1), for example, the set of individuals who pounded the fufu is given as four people in (13A). nevertheless, (13A1) follows from (13A) because if three students pounded the fufu, then at least two people pounded the fufu. (B) does not entail (B1) because (B1) carries the implication that only two people pounded the fufu showing that ex situ focus with *ko* also involves exhaustive identification.

4.1.1 Partial Answer Interpreted as full Answer

Hartmann and Zimmermann (2007:253) state, "if a focus (or focus-sensitive) particle cannot occur in mention some focus environments then that particle has exhaustivity properties associated with it." The purpose of this test is to find out if the particle *ko* can or cannot occur in mention-some focus environments in Dagbani as used by Hartmann and Zimmerman to test focus in Hausa. Consider the following scenario adapted from Hartmann and Zimmerman (2007:253) adopted from Duah (2015:12).

(14). "A student who is anxious that he might have failed a test approaches his teacher and asks: 'Can you tell me whether I have passed or not?' Unfortunately, teacher is by law forbidden to tell a student directly about his or her result. However, there is no law forbidding him to talk about other students' performances" (Duah 2015:12).

(15)	Q:	ʧiʧa**,**	m-pa:si	teisi	maa	bee	m-be	pa:si?
		teacher	1sg-pass.perf	exam	Det	conj	1sg-neg	pass.perf

'Teacher, did I pass the exams or not?'

	A:	Alima	pa :si-∅	teisi	maa
		Alima	pass.perf	exam	Det

'**Alima** passed the test.'

	A1:	Alima	**ko**	pa :si-∅	teisi	maa
		Alima	part	pass.perf	exam	Det

'**Alima** passed the test.'

A2:	Alima	**ko**	m-be	pa:si-Ø	teisi	maa
	Alima	part	1sg.neg	pass.perf	exam	Det

'Alima did not pass the test.'

(15A) provides the information that is not clear for other students to know their fate in the exam. The information in (15A1) with *ko* suggests that only *Alima* passed and the rest failed, so students can now tell their fate. But if the answer in (15A2) is given, then one would consider being part of those who passed since the *ko* focused subject indicated that only *Alima* failed the exam. Thus, the particle *ko* fails in a mention some contexts because it identifies a focused item(s) as the exhaustive subset of situationally relevant given elements.

4.1.2 Distributional Restrictions on Exhaustivity: Additive particles also/too

Duah (2014:13) notes that "exhaustive focus behaves differently from informational focus in that while the former bares certain operators such as additive particles 'also' or 'too' the latter may occur with such operators." The test explains that while exhaustive focus identifies only members of a set to the exclusion of others, also/too may add to the set. In Dagbani additive particles appear to be restricted where focus is exhaustive. This is illustrated in examples (16 and 17)

(16)	Q:	bɔ	jaʔ-a	ko	o-da?		
		what	again	part	3sg-buy.perf		

'What else did he buy?"

	A:	Azima	da-Ø	loori	gba		
		Azima	buy.perf	lorry	also		

'Azima also bought a lorry'

	A1:	*loori	(*gba)	ko	(*gba)	Azima	da.
		lorry	also	part	also	Azima	buy.perf

*'It was also a lorry that Azima bought.'

(17)	Q:	ŋʋn	jaʔ-a	n -ʧaŋ	ʃɪkʋrʋ	pahi	
		Who	again	1sg-go.perf	school	add	

'Who else went to school?'

	A:	Azima	gba	n-ʧaŋ	ʃɪkʋrʋ	maa	ʃɛlɨ
		Azima	also	1sg-go.perf	school	Det	some

'Azima also went to school.'

	A1:	Azima	(*gba)	ko	(*gba)	ʧaŋ	ʃɪkʋrʋ	maa	ʃɛlɨ
		Azima	also	part	also	go.perf	school	Det	some

*'it was also Azima who went to school.'

The data in (16 and 17) show the interaction of additive particles with in situ focus and ex situ focus with the ko particle. In (16A) and (17A), where the focus is on the subject Azima has different presuppositions than (16) and (17A1), respectively, where the object bears the focus. In each case, an appropriate context with an antecedent sentence is given which satisfies this presupposition. It is seen from the data in (16A1 and 17A1) that the prediction of Kiss does not hold for Dagbani. For instance, (16A&17A) show that, it is possible for Dagbani exhaustivity to co-occur with universal quantifier; gba "also" without affecting it grammaticality.

4.1.3 Interpretation of Negation

This test is applied to show that ex situ focus with *ko* involves exhaustivity. According to Issah (2008), the main proposal of this test is that if a structure is said to be exhaustive, then it should not be possible to follow such a structure up, by agreeing and adding anything to what is said to be in focus. It suggests that negating new information is odd since it does not exclude other possibilities. Thus whilst exhaustivity can be negated, new information cannot be negated. The test of interpretation of negation asserts that in a dialogue, only exhaustivity can be negated as in (18).

(18) Q: ŋʊn   n   ʧaŋ   puuni   **kpe?**
            who   1sg   go.perf   farm   loc
            'Who went to the farm here?'
      A: Ali   ʧaŋ -Ø   puuni   kpe
            Ali   go.perf   farm   loc
            'Ali went to the farm here.'
      A1:   Ali   *ko*   n-ʧaŋ   puuni   kpe
            Ali   part   1sg-go.perf   farm   loc
            'Ali went to the farm here (nobody else)'
      A2:   aayi   o   ʧaŋ   puuni   gba
            no   3sg   go.perf   farm   also
            No, Ali went to the farm also.'

The data in (18A1) show that exhaustivity is expressed by ko while that of (18) do not express exhaustivity. (18A1) implies that only *Ali* but nobody else goes to the farm. (18A) can also be used to answer the question but in case the information in (18A1) is false, then the speaker can be corrected in a form of a repair. This indicates that the morpheme *ko* becomes syntactically, an indispensable element in constituents which are exhaustively focused.

4.2 The Exhaustivity of ko as a Pragmatic Inference

The particle *ko* exhaustively identifies entities given in a context or marks them as information that is non-presupposed interpreted to mean "only X and nobody else." This can be seen when we compare the particle *ko* with the˼exclusive particle *kɔŋko* 'only' in the examples below:

(20)   A: Afi   ʧaŋ   la   daa-Ø   **kɔŋko**
            Afi   go.perf   Det   market   only
            'Afi went to the market only.'
       A1: Afi   be   ʧaŋ   daa   **kɔŋko** amaa   o-ʧaŋ   kuliga *(gba)
            Afi   neg   go.perf market only   conj   3sg go.perf stream too
            'Afi didn't go to the market only but she went to the stream too.'

(21)   A: daa   **ko**   ka   o-ʧaŋ-Ø
            Market   part   rel   3sg.go.perf
            'It was the market that she went.'

       A1: ka   daa   ko   ka   o-ʧaŋ   amaa Afi   ʧaŋ   ʃikʊrʊ *(gba)
            Not   market part   rel   3sg.go.perf conj   Afi   go.perf school   too
            'Afi didn't go to the market only but she went to the stream too.'

The data in (20A) show that Afi went only to the market but the meaning in (20A1) changes to show that the market was not the only place but the stream too. When negation is introduced into the initial clause containing the particle *ko*, the understanding is that X only went to the market is neutralized with the negation introduced.

5. Conclusion

The papers examined the particle *ko* as an exhaustive focus marker in Dagbani. It has shown that ex situ focus and in situ focus marked by the particle *ko* in Dagbani express exhaustivity. Thus, the focus particle *ko* can appropriately be identified as an exhaustive focus particle because it occurs only in exhaustive focus environment showing [+exhaustive]. *ko* has been proved to mean only X and nothing else by applying various standard tests for exhaustivity to test it. The data showed that the particle only occurs in exhaustive focus environments in the language monoclausal. It is also shown that Dagbani is mainly an ex-situ and in situ language with focus particles marking focus in situ and ex-situ to show exhaustivity. Consider the conversation between these people:

(21) Adam: ŋʊn   ɲu   kom   maa?
            who   drinkperf   water   Det
            'Who drank the water?'
      Alima: **Ali**   **ko**   n   ɲu-Ø   kom   maa.
            Ali   part   1sg   drink.perf   water   Det.
            'Ali drank the water.'

      Alima: **Ali**   **ɲu**   <u>kom</u>   **ko**
            Ali   drink.perf   water   part
            'Ali drank the water'
(22) Adam: ŋun   **ko**   n   kana   kpe?
            who   part   1sg.   come.perf   loc
            "Who came here alone?"
      Alima: **Ali**   **ko**   n   kana   kpe
            Ali   part   1sg.   perf   loc
            "Ali came here."

The test of exhaustivity confirms that *ko* as a focus particle which only occurs in exhaustive focus environments in Dagbani. *ko* marks both SF and NSF with or without movement in a focus sentence, and can also co-occur with focus markers [*ka, n*, la] in ex situ by changing their functions to a deictic discourse particle and not focus markers.

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FRAMING AND PERSPECTIVES: EXPLORING THE RHETORICAL FUNCTIONS OF THEMATIC CHOICES IN NIGERIAN EDITORIALS ON TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

Bukola Alfred
Rotimi Taiwo

Abstract

This paper explores Nigerian media's choices of Themes in editorials on terrorism in Nigeria. The study relates to how well Nigerian newspaper organisations attempted to reveal or mask security cases across different regions of the country through thematic choices. The editorials were sourced from The Punch and The Guardian (South-Western region), Vanguard and The Sun (East Region) and Leadership and Daily Trust (Northern Region) between 2014 and 2016. Our findings show that preposition-headed adjuncts occurred the most in thematic positions. Marked adjuncts were used to substantiate claims, inject prejudices and mark varying degrees of commitments. Marked complements were thematised to project the sufferers/victims of violence, thus achieve emotive effects on the readers. The multiple Themes were made to function as adversatives, correctives, emphases and stance markers on security measures in the editorials. All the newspapers employed thematic relations that explicitly projected negative disposition to the violent activities of cattle herders, Boko Haram insurgents and Niger Delta militant in Nigeria.

Keywords: Theme, Nigerian Newspapers, Framing, Editorials, Terrorism

1. Introduction

Human beings employ most of their time communicating in one way or the other, on daily basis, either through verbal, non-verbal or written means. According to Owolabi (2016:242), "language does not exist…because man is a rational being; it exists because man is a sociable creature". Ekeanyanwu & Jokodola (2009) says that man is born with an innate desire to always communicate with other people. On a daily basis, individuals seek to persuade and convince people in order to get things done. All these intentions are made possible through communication. The interpretation of any

message depends, to a large extent, on the way such is packaged. The skilful use of language encompasses an individual's ability to use language in achieving intended results in specific situations. Halliday & Mathiessen (2004) opine that the choices of certain lexical choices and syntactic patterns have functional roles in relating the writer's or speaker's intentions to an audience. Thus, it could be said that there is a nexus between the preferences for syntactic constructions and intentions of a language user. This paper analyses the way news organisations in Nigeria frame their comments on terrorism in Nigeria.

It is often said that one out of every five black men would likely be a Nigerian (Ajodo-Adebanjoko & Okorie, 2014:11). Nigeria is currently battling with different security challenges such as *Boko Haram* insurgency, Herdsmen attacks and Niger-Delta militancy. The several strategies put up by the government over the years to curb terrorist attacks have simply resulted in superficial window dressing as there has not been any noticeable improvement on the security state of the nation. The severe havoc wrecked by these menaces have prompted Nigerian newspaper organisations to express their dispositions towards these security issues. What necessitated this research is the need to examine how Nigerian newspapers employ the textual metafunction in relating security issues and marking ideological assumptions to certain segments of editorials on terrorism in Nigeria.

2. A Brief History on the Emergence of Terrorism in Nigeria

There have been several arguments as to what constitutes terrorism in different disciplines. Such arguments have generated from criminologists, security personnel and legal experts. This study adopts Pinkerton Global Intelligence Service (PGIS) description of terrorism as actions involving the threatened or actual use of unlawful coercion and violence to achieve certain goals (Lafrue & Dugan, 2007). Several scholars have written on the history of terrorism in Nigeria as well as the perceived motives and motivations of different terrorist groups in Nigeria. Chinwokwu (2012) attribute the genesis of this menace to the forceful amalgamation of unwilling ethnic groups in Nigeria, which resulted in feelings of religious and political rancour, perceived oppression, marginalisation of the minority groups and undue favouritism of majority groups. These feelings have snowballed into more grave security threats and attracted global concerns.

For instance, on 1st October 2010, a home-grown terrorist bomb attack was hatched in the Federal capital Territory (Abuja) by a group known as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), in the south-south region of Nigeria, during the country's golden jubilee anniversary. This was preceded and followed by several other bomb attacks and kidnappings in different states of Northern Nigeria by an Islamic sect, *Boko Haram*. Terrorism in Nigeria took a new turn after the April 2011

general elections. The Police Headquarters, Abuja was bombed on June 16, 2011; United Nations Office, Abuja was also bombed on August 26, 2011. Schools and places of worships have also been under bomb attacks by the *Boko Haram* sect. Cattle herders also launch attacks on villages in rural communities in different parts of the country. Villagers/ farmers are massacred at will by these nomadic herdsmen when accesses to farmlands are denied the grazing cattle. The insecurity state of the country has earned the nation international stigmatisation and Nigeria is being blacklisted as a terror nation by the US government (Dankano, 2010; Ojeme, 2011). Terrorism in the country has thus been heightened in Nigeria by religious differences, ethnic marginalization and agricultural factors.

3. Thematisation in Texts

Halliday (1994) establishes that every clause has a Theme-Rheme structure, one part starting the message, the other completing it. The Theme is usually a linguistic item employed at the initial position within a clause structure, in preparation for the message which is contained in the rheme. Every clause has a message that is expressed according to the order of syntactic arrangement. Bloor and Bloor (1995:72) define the Theme as that "constituent at the starting point of a clause" that a communicator initiates his message with. The authors compare thematic structure to information structure and observe that the Theme is usually parallel to "given information" while the rheme represents "new information" (p.72). Taiwo (2001) adds that the Theme reveals the perspective from which the writer or speaker intends to communicate the message. Fries (1995:12) refers to the Theme as the "orienter" of the communicator's message. In the author's view, it is meant that the function of the Theme is to direct or guide the audience to the message which is contained in other parts of the clauses other than the first element. Downing and Locke (2006:224) state that the Theme represents a speaker or writer's choice of clausal initial element whether in a bid to link the present clause with earlier ones or deter the message of the clause till later. The Theme is "the element which serves as the point of departure of the message" (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004: 64; 2014: 89). The remaining part of the message in which the Theme is developed is called the rheme. There have been arguments as to what elements could be said to function as Theme. Huddleston (1988) is of the opinion that the Theme could be any element occupying any position within a clause structure as long as it conveys an important sense. The author adds that thematised elements must have semantic contents. Osisanwo (2001) also brings to play the issue of intention on what is thematised.

Thematic analysis is carried out against the backdrop that what occupies the initial position in a clause is significant and has a way of influencing the perception of readers. An unmarked Theme usually has an agent/ actor conflating with the subject, while a marked one would have a verb, complement or adjunct at the initial position based on the communicator's choice. In textual meaning, Halliday and Mathiessen

(2014:79) opine that the unmarked Theme conflates with the "psychological subject", "logical subject" and "grammatical subject" while the marked Theme is "something other than the Subject, in a declarative clause" (p.98). Other experiential elements that could occur at the initial position are adverbials, complements and verbs. A simple Theme "contains one, and only one, of these experiential elements" (p.105) while a multiple Theme combines two or at most three of the experiential elements.

4. Linguistic Studies on Terrorism Discourse in Nigeria

Terrorism Discourse in Nigeria has enjoyed great attention from linguists who have tried to investigate how Nigerian print media construct the activities of certain terrorist groups. Ayoola (2010) examined the Nigerian newspapers' ideological perspectives on Niger-Delta activities from the critical discourse approach. Igwebuike and Taiwo (2015) examined the representation of the Bakassi-Peninsula Conflict in Nigeria and Cameroon print media, through the system of transitivity. Osisanwo (2016) explored the discourse strategies deployed in Nigerian news reports on the representation of Boko Haram terrorism. Although, these works serve as a springboard from which this research work takes off, they have not considered the media's uses of clausal framing and thematisation in representing terrorist attacks in Nigerian newspaper editorials. The objectives of the study are to (a) identify and analyse the thematic choices in the editorials and (b) discuss the semantic and discourse implications that these choices have on the ideological projection of certain segments of the editorials.

5. Methodology

The corpus for this study comprises editorial from six Nigerian dallies namely *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *The Vanguard*, *The Sun*, *Leadership* and *Daily Trust*. The newspapers are selected from the different ethnic divisions in Nigeria and ethnicity may influence the different new organisations' perception of, and framing of certain social participants in the security incidents. The editorials were those published between 2014 and 2016 – a period when the security issues were quite intense. The study is hinged on Halliday's (2014) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

6. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of Themes in the selected editorials was done from the perspectives of simple/multiple Themes. The frequencies and percentages of the marked/unmarked Themes in the simple thematic structure as well as the frequencies of multiple Themes were examined. An attempt was made at investigating what clausal elements

characterise the thematic positions and what semantic and ideological implications such thematic projections have on editorials of this nature. An attempt was also made to see how well the thematic structures adopted by the newspapers objectively relate security problems in the different regions of the country.

From the analysis, it was discovered that the simple Theme was mostly employed in news editorials on security challenges. While the simple Theme appeared 1397 times, the multiple Theme appeared only 193 times in the entire data. Out of a total of 1397 occurrences of the simple Theme, 1085 were unmarked, having a percentage of 77.7%, while just 312 were marked constituting about 22.3% of the total occurrences of simple Themes. In the multiple thematic structure, out of a total of 193 multiple Themes, conjunctive adjunct + ideational Theme had the highest occurrence, appearing 81 times with a percentage of 42% and this was followed by modal adjunct + ideational Theme, appearing 54 times with a percentage of 28%. Conjunction + ideational Theme occurred 40 times with a percentage of 20.7% while continuative + ideational Theme appeared 18 times, having a percentage of 9.3%. This interpretation is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Frequency of Occurrences of the Theme System as Used across all the Editorials

Theme Type				LEs	VEs	GEs	PEs	SEs	DTEs	Total	%
Simple	Marked	Adjunct	Adverbial	6	6	11	25	7	11	66	4.7
			Preposition	21	10	16	40	14	22	123	8.8
			Pronoun	7	1	2	1	3	2	16	1.1
		Complement	Common Pronoun	17	14	14	14	10	13	82	5.9
			Nominalisation	0	0	0	3	0	1	4	0.3
			Adjective	3	0	15	2	1	0	21	1.5
	Unmarked	NG in declarative		110	121	161	223	132	146	893	63.9
		Predicator in Imperative		0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.1
		Wh-word in Wh-Question		1	6	9	3	0	3	22	1.6
		Finite Verb in Yes/No Question		3	2	6	0	1	0	12	0.9
		Clause as Theme		26	17	40	31	19	24	157	11.2
	Total			194	177	274	342	188	222	1397	100
Multiple	Textual	Continuative+ Ideational		3	0	6	5	4	0	18	9.3
		Conjunction+ Ideational		10	0	16	9	5	0	40	20.7
		Conjunctive Adjunct+ Ideational		12	8	34	16	9	2	81	42
	Interpersonal	Modal adjunct+ Ideational		6	5	24	16	3	0	54	28
		Vocatives+ Ideational		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total			31	13	80	46	21	2	193	100

7. Semantic and Ideological Implications of the Simple Themes as Used in the Editorials

The unmarked Theme occurred more than its marked counterpart in the simple thematic structure across the editorials. It was observed that these print media were mostly interested in communicating concise ideas to the members of the public rather than fronting certain syntactic elements when such can be expressed in plain structures. However, in some few excerpts, the preference for marked Themes (initial adjunct, complements) was informed by certain ideological undercurrents.

In the category of marked adjuncts, preposition-headed adjuncts appeared the most. It was observed that this preponderance of usage was due to the fact that a lot of details could be clustered into its syntax (through the Prepend-Completive structure) more than the adverb-headed adjuncts and marked complements.

> THM1: **In a deadly attack on Ikorodu villages in Lagos**, suspected militants killed between 20 and 50 people… **In Arepo, Ibafo and Mowe, in Obafemi-Owode LGA of Ogun State**, the activities of the militants have become a nightmare for residents…**In Ibafo**, daring and well-armed militants engaged police and Nigerian Army troops in a gun duel in broad daylight during the visit of Yetunde Onanuga, the deputy governor of the state, to assess the damage done to petroleum pipelines.
> *The Punch*, Clearing Lagos, Ogun of Murderous Militants, 15.07.2016

> THM2: **In the same Kano**, the following day, two separate attacks took place: **in the first case**, a girl of about 17 years detonated a bomb at an NNPC mega station; the bomber along with five people died while others were injured. **In the second incident, about three hours later**, a 19-year-old girl blew herself up at the Kano Trade Fair ground; she was the only casualty. **On Wednesday, July 30**, another female teenage bomber killed herself at the entrance of Kano State Polytechnic; two got killed and 21 civilians were injured.
> *Leadership*, Cowardly Fighters and Female Suicide Bombers, 06.08.2014

> THM3: **Between the president's inauguration on May 29 and today**, no fewer than 500 Nigerians have been killed, hundreds more injured and property worth millions of naira destroyed by the sect.
> *The Sun*, Checking Boko Haram's Renewed offensive, 20.07.2015

In the excerpts above, the preposition-headed adjuncts were instrumental in creating a strong imagery in the minds of the readers. In a bid to make readers accede to an urgent termination of security threats in Nigeria, details (relating to specific location, period, reason or purpose etc.) about cases of insecurity were provided. As much as editorials are not supposed to report situations anew, the newspapers considered these details necessary to substantiate whatever claims they make if such would be taken seriously. The marked adjunct in THM1 and THM2 provided in-depth information on the various locations where militancy and bomb explosions were recorded respectively. *The Punch*, established in the south-western part of Nigeria and located in Lagos, exploited the preposition-headed adjunct to project a sense of credibility and detailed accurate information needed to support its claims on the spread of militancy in different parts of south-west, Nigeria. The choice of this thematic structure may have been influenced by the fact that militancy is largely ascribed to the south-southern part of the country. Thus, this structure was meant to perform the function of presenting this security as being capable of snowballing into greater threats to the entire country.

Leadership also employed the thematised preposition-headed adjunct, giving full details about the locations and times of several cases of detonations in different parts of Kano. The northern newspaper attempted to project an image of its conversance with the severity of *Boko Haram* cases in the northern Nigeria. These specifics were needed in order to dissuade readers from taking such incidents with levity and were implicitly meant to bring about two possible reactions (fear and a strong desire to end security problems in the different regions in Nigeria). In THM3, the thematised preposition-headed adjunct was intended by *The Sun* to generate a worrisome feeling on the number of lives that were lost in less than two months (between May 29, 2017 and July 20, 2017) as a result of the thriving activities of *Boko Haram* insurgents. This was to emphasise the brutality of the sect in Nigeria and accentuate the need to terminate their operations. The thematised preposition-headed adjunct in THM4 authenticated the realities of various security challenges in Nigeria.

Some of the thematised preposition-headed adjuncts were made to function as evidentials as seen in the excerpts below.

> THM4: **In a statement by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Femi Adesina**, Buhari said: "But another serious form of insecurity has reared its head on the Niger-Delta. The objective is to colonise the country economically by sabotaging oil and gas installations.
> *The Guardian*, Niger Delta Militants can't Colonise, 31.10.2016
>
> THM5: **In its November 2015 report**, the Sydney, Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace, which codifies the GTI, labelled

herdsmen as the fourth deadliest terror organisation in the world after Boko Haram, the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq and al-Shabab. "There have been reports of a link between Boko Haram and Fulani militants, particularly in regard to smuggling and organised crime.
The Punch, Treating Violent herdsmen as Terrorists, 06.05.2016

In these excerpts, the principal aim of the newspapers was to tactically argue for degree of reliability of the claims in the reports. In THM4, *The Guardian*, in an attempt to avoid the misrepresentations of the interest of the Niger Delta agitators, exploited the thematised preposition-headed adjunct to attribute the derisive objectives about the plights of the Niger-Delta militants to the statement made by President Buhari as reported by the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity. The source of the information was fronted because it made a clear distinction of the "Sayer" and also provided a sort of innocence for the newspaper should there be any misrepresentation. The thematic option ideologically revealed that *The Guardian* does not subscribe to the activities of the Niger Delta agitators and that Buhari's statement reverberated with its attitudes.

In THM5, *The Punch* attributed the labelling of herdsmen as 'the fourth deadliest terror organisation in the world' to a 'Sayer' – *the November 2015 report of the Sydney, Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace*. Although the ascriptions seemed to serve as a supporting statement for the newspaper's negative disposition towards the herders, yet the thematised element helped them to tactically claim innocence of being part of that ascription.

There were some other instances of the thematised preposition-headed adjuncts that simply were used by the newspapers to inject their prejudices towards certain security problems and personnel as seen in the excerpts below.

THM6: **In a country where human life is valued**, the effects of this gory incident would have attracted national attention.
Leadership, Killing in Defence of Cattle, Crops, 29.01.2014

THM7: **In developed parts of the world**, anti-terrorism units are elite military outfits that have become a nemesis to terrorists.
The Punch, Imperative of an Anti-Terrorism Taskforce, 30.08.2014

THM8: **With an integrated militia within the Nigerian army**, we are of the view that victory against the insurgents may yet be swifter than expected.
Leadership, The Rise of Vigilantes, 26.11.2014

In THM6, *Leadership* used the thematised adjunct to project an insensitive image of the Nigerian government towards the life of its citizenry and its interest in the safety of cows. As at the time the editorial was written, cattle herders were posing a great challenge to the peace of the nation and so the newspaper ideologically draw attention to the perceived worthlessness placed on the lives of Nigerians. The thematic choice was intended to challenge the government to do more about the herdsmen killings.

Also, in THM7, *The Punch* thematised "in the developed part of the world" to project lack of confidence and inefficiency in the Nigerian anti-terrorism force. The thematic structure made an implied comparison between the Nigerian anti-terrorism force and those of the developed countries. The overriding intention was to depict the Nigerian anti-terrorism force as inexperienced and unskilled to handle the insurgents and propel them to either get trained or solicit foreign aid in order to bring the *Boko Haram* insurgents to book.

In THM8, the newspaper expressed its strong interest in an integrated militia within the Nigerian army in order to yield victory over the *Boko Haram* sect. This thematic choice may have been informed by the fact that the northern region suffers attacks the most from this sect and being a northern newspaper, it seemed to know where the shoe pinches the most.

In all the extracts above, the thematised preposition-headed adjuncts were used as linguistic tools of persuasion, aimed at feeding readers with necessary details, evidences and projecting prejudices necessary to make readers seek for the immediate solutions to security issues in Nigeria. From the very first clausal item, readers' interpretations are framed within the newspapers' perspectives to the issues being discussed.

Unlike the preposition-headed adjuncts, adverb-headed adjuncts appeared minimally in all the editorials. Most of the roles assigned to this kind of thematised adjunct were used to lead readers into interpreting certain propositions through specific temporal prisms.

> THM9: **Already**, the United States government has, as part of efforts to contain the insurgency, declared Boko Haram as a terrorist group with a bounty on the head of its leader.
> *Leadership*, The North as War Theatre? 24.02.2014

> THM10: **Many times**, the attackers massacre the farmers at will, with no hope at all of help from security operatives.
> *The Sun*, Stop the Killings Now, 28.04.2016

> THM11: **Barely a week ago**, in Adamawa and southern part of Kaduna, some villages came under brutal attacks from the herdsmen

in ways that left their victims in horror and the whole of Nigeria in shock…**Recently**, a traditional ruler, Lazarus Agai, the Saf Ron Kurele, in Bokkos town in Plateau State was killed while visiting his farm, by the same herdsmen.
The Guardian, The Menace of Herdsmen, 15.08.2016

In the examples above, the adverbial phrases of time in the thematic positions were immediately followed by parts of the clause that bear information on the occurrences of certain security challenges in the country. The overriding intention was to show the authenticity and frequency of various security menaces in Nigeria at different times. The thematised adverb-headed adjuncts seem to be pivotal in attracting the sympathy of the readers.

In THM9, *Leadership* thematised the finite adverbial clause of time 'already' in order to draw the attention of readers to the United States government's labelling of the *Boko Haram* sect. The thematised adverbial ideologically implied that *Boko Haram*'s existence in Nigeria has lingered and their activities have been so grievous, especially in the northern Nigeria, that it has attracted global attention.

In THM10, the thematised adverbial phrase was used to signal the recurrent brutal attacks of the herdsmen on defenceless farmers in host communities. *The Sun* thematised "many times" to project the continuous ruthless activities of the herdsmen and get readers embittered against this group. The ideological implication of this thematic structure is heightened by the verbal group "massacre". The thematised adverbial also projected an unperturbed attitude of the government and security operatives about the situation despite the countless lives lost any time such clashes occur.

In THM11, the adverbial phrases were thematised to signal the activities of herdsmen. As at the various times when these editorials were written, there were rumours on the fact that the herdsmen have been overpowered in those states and that such menaces may soon become a thing of the past. The newspaper intended to project the existence of the groups and their spontaneous attacks at intervals. The thematised elements accentuated the subsequent loss of lives in the hands of this deadly group if their activities were allowed to fester.

Also, syntactic complements were also thematised to perform some ideological functions.

> THM12: **An attempt to colour electioneering in the country very dangerously** was recently made by a group of former Niger Delta militants, who issues a threat to make the nation ungovernable should

incumbent Goodluck Jonathan lose in the forthcoming presidential poll.
Leadership, The Threat by Ex-Militants, 05.02.2015

THM13: **Over 50 people** were reportedly killed and **property worth millions of naira** destroyed last week in a renewed attack on Tiv communities in Benue State by nomadic herdsmen.
Leadership, Killing in Defence of Cattle, Crops, 29.01.2014

THM14: **Maiduguri** was hit six times in October 2015 with 76 people killed.
Vanguard, End-game Strategies against Terror, 17.11.2015

In the above excerpts, the post-verbal elements were thematised through passivisation. THM12 is an excerpt on Niger Delta militancy in Nigeria and *Leadership* fronted the syntactic complement that bears the consequence of the activities of the former Niger Delta militants. The thematic structure projected *Leadership*'s judgement and prejudice towards the activities of the militants. The editorial summed up their plights in a negative light and fronted it in order to create a bias in the minds of the readers against the group. In THM13, the aim of the newspaper was to front the affected – the killing of 'over 50 people' and destruction of 'property worth millions of naira', though not objectively, as the newspaper seemed to lack accuracy. This thematic structure was aimed at appealing to the emotional and psychological impulse of the readers. In this excerpt, *Leadership* though intended to project the irreparable havoc as well as the extent and worth of lives and properties of the affected first, it still employed a long passive (an explicit by-agentive adjunct) to reveal who the perpetrators of the acts are – the herdsmen.

In THM14, Maiduguri has been noted in the media as a trouble spot in Nigeria because *Boko Haram*'s activities are universally accrued to it. The newspaper thematised the post-verbal element as a linguistic tool for getting the attention of readers to the thriving activities of *Boko Haram* in Nigeria.

Some instances of thematised complements were used to project uncomfortable viewpoints of the print media.

THM15: **NDDC, a remarkable initiative**, is known to have become a scheme for corruption and enrichment of a few.
The Guardian, On the Niger Delta and Amnesty Programme, 11.08.2014

THM16: **Standards** have to be respected and **established constitutional rights** must be protected without making others feel any loss of their identities.
The Guardian, The Agitation for Biafra, 24 November, 2015
THM17: **Both parties** are advised to come to the negotiating table with the right tools and attitude.
The Sun, The FG/ Niger Delta Militants Dialogue, 04.09.2016

Olowe (1995: 242) posits in his research on thematisation in newspaper editorials that it is a 'veritable vehicle for accentuating some viewpoints and downplaying others'. The newspapers employed short passivised structures (the omission of the relegated by-agentive adjuncts pointing to the Senser in THM15 and the Agents in THM16 and THM17). The choices of the short passives were an attempt by the newspaper to emphasise or front ideas (contained in the syntactic Goal) which seem to be ideologically uncomfortable. The Senser in THM15 may have been omitted because it relates to The Guardian's opinion of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). However, the choice of short passive construction afforded the newspaper an opportunity to implicitly position the Senser as 'all' or Nigerians' and to represent its judgement of the NDDC as public knowledge. *The Guardian* intended to appeal to the readers' emotion by fusing their ideas with that of the readers so that it counts as a unanimous idea.

In THM16 and THM17, the short passivised constructions gave the newspapers the opportunity to less assertively state ideas (contained in the thematised goals). Although the editorials considered these ideas valuable and results-yielding, they are careful to explicitly show the Agents, which obviously would have been "the news organisation", so that they do not damage their face before their readers.

THM18: **So worrisome** was the situation that three weeks after the abduction, Nigerians were at a loss about the state of the girls.
The Guardian, Chibok Girls: One Year After, 14.04.2015

THM19: **More ominous** is the arrest of Hadiza Musa, a 10-year-old girl, who was discovered to be wearing an explosive-fitted belt in Funtua, Katsina State, by security agents.
The Punch, Female Suicide Bombers on the Prowl, 05.08.2014

In the excerpts above, the syntactic complements were thematised through a device known as 'preposing' (Ward, Birner and Huddleston, 2002). In THM18, *The Guardian* thematised the post-verbal element "so worrisome" in order to induce worry over the safety of the abducted Chibok Girls amidst the callous *Boko Haram* sect, one year after their abduction. The marked complement thematised the fear of all Nigerians and was

used to challenge the government to urgently do something about seeking the release of these girls. The reordered structure in THM19 enabled *The Punch* to foreground its attitude towards the incorporation of innocent children in the *Boko Haram* activities. "More ominous" was used by the newspaper to express worries over the dynamic strategies of the sect. The thematised complements were used to express shock over the age-group of children who were at that time being used to champion the course of this sect and to warn Nigerians not to be misled by the innocence of children and females. In essence, the marked complement was ideologically used to correct the mind-sets of readers and admonish all to be security conscious. The thematised complement could therefore be said to perform informative roles.

7.1   Semantic and Ideological Implications of Multiple Themes as Used in the Editorials

In the thematic position, the analysis also revealed that the textual Theme occurred more with the ideational Theme than did the interpersonal Theme. Conjunctive adjuncts and modal adjuncts (although appearing minimally) combined more with the ideational Theme than any other clausal element in the multiple thematic structures. A possible reason for the preponderance of the conjunctive adjunct + ideational Theme is the fact that it is used in achieving the kind of logicality needed to convince readers about taking drastic measures against security threats in Nigeria. If these editorials are to be taken seriously, grammatical items that signal logicality of points are essential, as these help the newspaper to achieve intended goals. Although the thematised conjunctive adjuncts had their meanings dependent on previous clauses, they were implicatively employed to perform certain roles in the clauses where they occur.

In the excerpts generally, most of the occurrences of the thematised conjunctive adjuncts were used as adversatives, emphases, correctives, causals, temporals, conditionals *etc*. and were immediately followed by ideational Themes in order to substantiate the claims of the newspapers on certain security issues as seen in the examples below.

> THM20: The efforts of this group of people are highly commendable. The fact that they dare confront the enemy armed with bows and arrows, spears, clubs and dane guns, at great risk to their lives, is an indication of their bravery and desperation to resist the invaders and liberate their homeland. **However**, **there** are several unforeseen dangers and disadvantages that must not be overlooked. **First, because they are poorly armed and ill trained** they might easily be killed in battles with insurgents. **Secondly, since they are not trained and have not taken the oath that every military man**

takes, they can easily switch loyalties. **Thirdly, and perhaps the most likely danger of all**, is that after Boko Haram is finally defeated...
Leadership, The Rise of Vigilantes, 26.11.2014

THM21: Indeed a sizeable part of the area has for years remained a killing field where hundreds of lives have been wasted, no thanks to the frequent clashes between the local farmers and nomadic Fulani herdsmen. **In fact, no week** passes without media reports of fresh attacks…**For instance, between May and July this year**, no fewer than 140 persons were reported killed when some suspected Herdsmen attacked some communities in Benue state.
Vanguard, Halt the Middle Belt Killings Now, 29.07.2015

THM22: The failure to prosecute those responsible for such killings is prima facie evidence in the international community that the victims can no longer count on Nigeria's judicial system to protect them, and would therefore need concerted international protection. **In other words**, **the mindless killings** qualify to attract international intervention, including investigations by the International Criminal Court (ICC).
The Sun, Time to Build Cattle Ranches, 15.10.2015

THM23: Militants moonlighting as robbers and kidnappers, have terrorised several Lagos and Ogun communities for a long time… they have fanned out to Lagos and Ogun. Though the state authorities noticed the pattern, they did nothing concrete to quickly curb the militancy. **As a result**, **about 100 gunmen suspected to be militants** confidently laid siege to Fatoki community in Igando, Lagos State, last week, in a three-day rampage.
The Punch, Clearing Lagos, Ogun of Murderous Militants, 15.07.2016

In THM20, the newspaper presented the incorporation of the local vigilantes in the collective fight against Boko Haram in the positive light and even eulogised the group for its courageousness in daring to fight the dreaded *Boko Haram* insurgents with inferior weapons. The thematised conjunctive adjunct 'However' was used to project *Leadership*'s fears and worries and thus negative disposition to the involvement of the crude local vigilantes in the fight against *Boko Haram*. The conjunctive adjuncts signalling temporals (*first*, *secondly*, *thirdly*) provided an opportunity for the newspaper to elucidate on their fears while trying to ultimately dissuade the military forces and government from engaging in an act which may end up in future regrets.

In THM21, the thematised conjunctive adjunct performed two functions: emphasis and appositive. In the first instance, *Vanguard* aimed at emphasising the weekly attacks and killings by nomadic herdsmen in the Middle Belt. Ideologically, the thematic choice was used to heighten the reality and thriving nature of herdsmen attacks in the Middle Belt. In the second instance, the conjunctive adjunct was used to further amplify *Vanguard*'s points by exemplifying and giving records of the number of lives lost within two months (May-July) in 2015. Both lexico-grammatical choices were persuasively used to make Nigerians yearn for solutions to the killings, especially in that region.

In THM22, the conjunctive adjunct was employed to function as corrective, thus extending the opinion of *The Sun* on the cases of incessant killings by the herdsmen. The thematic structure was aimed at positioning herdsmen' activities as an issue worthy of international recognition and attention, and as such should not be treated as mere local or national affairs. The print media proposed that cases of herdsmen attacks deserve the kind of global attention paid to *Boko Haram* insurgency.

In THM 23, the thematised conjunctive adjunct accentuated a causal effect of the activities of the Niger Delta militants in Lagos. *The Punch* aimed to point the attention of readers to how the negligence of the state authorities has fanned the activities of Niger Delta militants to other parts of the country.

The modal + ideational thematic structure also had a high occurrence next to conjunctive+ ideational thematic structure. The choices of modal adjunct + ideational thematic structure were those which mostly reflected an air of desirability, opinion, probability, presumption and obviousness as seen in the examples below.

> THM24: The region yearns for true development – beyond rhetoric and tokenism. **Regrettably**, **institutions genuinely created to bring development to the region** have merely compounded the problems and enriched only appointees or community or group leaders.
> *Guardian*, On the Niger Delta and Amnesty Programme, 11.08.2014
>
> THM25**: Undoubtedly, the recent abduction of elder statesman, Olu Falae, by men suspected to be Herdsmen** has once again highlighted the grave security threat posed by kidnapping to lives in Nigerians.
> *The Punch*, Kidnapping: Need for Fresh Approach, 02.10.2015
> THM26: **Without doubt**, **such effort at community-level self-defence** would raise awareness at the grassroots that the continuous peace and safety of the community is the responsibility of everyone

in the community, which in turn would heighten the awareness and civic duty of fishing out antisocial elements in the community and bringing them to the notice of the relevant authorities for appropriate action. Surely all of which in the end would expedite the process of finding a lasting solution to the nightmare of the insurgency that prevails among citizens now.
Daily Trust, the Kala/Balge Pushbacks against Insurgents, 26.05.2014

In THM24, *The Guardian* used "regrettably' to express disappointments over the activities of the institutions that were meant to oversee the needs of the Niger Delta people and how their dealings have rather heightened crises in this trouble spot.
In THM25 and THM26, the modal adjuncts were employed to express obviousness. The newspapers employed the thematised modal adjuncts 'obviously', 'undoubtedly' and 'without doubt' to accentuate the certainty of their claims. In THM25, the need to show the reality of nomadic herdsmen attacks in Nigeria and how they operate informed the use of the modal adjunct 'undoubtedly'. In THM26, the modal adjunct 'without doubt' was used to project *Daily Trust*'s support for self-defence by communities and encourage members of communities to take the safety of their lives and properties in their hands.

8. Summary and Conclusion

This study has attempted an analysis of thematic choices in editorials on terrorism in Nigeria and how such choices were used to frame the media's perspectives and drive readers' interpretations on certain segments of the editorials. In all the newspaper editorials, preposition-headed adjuncts occurred the most in the category of marked adjuncts and were used to supply details needed to support the claims of the activities of insurgents in certain regions as well as the realities of certain security challenges in different parts of the country. Marked adjuncts were also used to attribute certain claims to external sources other than the news organisations, inject prejudices and also mark the extent of commitment that the newspapers have in their propositions. The adverb-headed adjuncts were used to accentuate the exact periods/times when security problems occurred. Complements were thematised to project the sufferers/victims of violence, thus needed to achieve emotive effects on the audience. The multiple Themes were made to function as additives, adversatives, correctives, emphases and express the newspaper's stance towards security issues and security measures in the editorial. Through the thematic analysis, it was observed that all the newspapers expressed concern over the security issues raised in the editorials without biases. The newspapers employed thematic relations that explicitly projected its negative disposition to the violent activities of cattle herders, Boko Haram insurgents and Niger Delta militant in Nigeria.

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Daily Trust Newspaper, Nigeria.
Leadership Newspaper, Nigeria.
The Guardian Newspaper, Nigeria.
The Punch Newspaper, Nigeria.
The Sun Newspaper, Nigeria.
Vanguard Newspaper, Nigeria.

A LIST OF ABBREVIATED WORDS
LEs - *Leadership* Editorials
VEs - *Vanguard* Editorials
GEs - *The Guardian* Editorials
PEs - *The Punch* Editorials
SEs - *The Sun* Editorials
DTEs - *Daily Trust* Editorials
THM - Theme
NG - Nominal Group

IDEOLOGIES AND IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES IN ONLINE ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT AMONG NIGERIANS

Temitope Michael Ajayi
Ganiu Abisoye Bamgbose

Abstract

Nigeria is a multilingual country comprising peoples of different ethnic, political and religious inclinations, hence the incessant ethno-religious conflicts that lace her trajectory. Different scholarly works have examined ethno-religious conflict in the Nigerian space from the religious, sociological, historical and political perspectives. However, little attention has been given to the phenomenon from the linguistic perspective. This study, therefore, drawing inputs from van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis and Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory, investigates how Nigerians deploy language in engaging in ethno-religious conflict as evident in their online comments on issues of national interest in the country. Different online comments and reactions of Nigerians to four recent national issues – Apostle Suleman's alleged 'sex scandal', the Southern Kaduna killings in Kaduna, the Yoruba-Hausa crisis in Ife, Osun State, and the issues surrounding the arrest, detention and clamour for the release of Nnamdi Kanu, a strong agitator for the Biafra State, as reported by three online platforms, Sahara Reporters, Vanguard Newspaper and Nairaland.com are purposively selected as data for this study. The findings of the study reveal elements of they (them) versus we (us) ideology and different forms of impoliteness strategies permeate the discourse of online ethno-religious conflict among Nigerians. This is a development that portends a bad omen for the continued peace and unity of the country.

Keywords: Ethno-religious conflict, van Dijk Critical Discourse Analysis, Culpeper's Impoliteness theory, Nigeria

1. Background to the Study

Nigeria is one of the countries in the world populated by people who are diverse in their linguistic, religious, cultural, ethnic and ideological stand-points. The fact that there are many languages in the country attests to her cultural and ethnic diversity. In the area of religion, Nigeria ranks among the most religious countries in the world, as, apart from the two major religions officially recognised by the government of the country, there are several other religions and religious groups in the country. This multi-lingual, cultural, ethnic, religious and ideological nature of the country is perhaps the reason her trajectory has been laced with myriads of conflicts right from inception. The afore-submission becomes compelling in view of the countless ethno-religious, cultural and linguistic conflicts the country has witnessed between her independence in 1960 and now (2017). Some of these unfortunate conflict-turn crises include the Kano riot of 1953, the 1967 to 1970 Civil War, the incessant cases of ethno-religious killings in the North (e.g. the Southern Kaduna killing of 2017), and the Yoruba-Hausa conflict in Ile Ife in 2017, among others. All these are worrisome developments that have in one way or the other threatened the 'fragile' peace and unity of the country.

In reaction to this ugly trend and scenario, several scholarly works from the sociological, religious and historical perspectives have been carried out, both within and outside the country. However, not so much attention has been given to the study of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria from a linguistic point of view. This study is a crucial intervention in this regard, as it demonstrates the fact that, even when the various ethnic and religious groups in the country do not engage in physical attack on one another, there are elements of subtle hatred, indignation and suspicion among them, a development that portends a bad omen for the national integration of the country.

In this study, we aim to examine:
- the impoliteness strategies and discursive moves employed by actors in social media ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria;
- how religious ideologies are employed and perceived as weapons of *word war* on the social media among Nigerians;
- how ethnic ideologies are employed and perceived as weapons of *word war* on the social media among Nigerians;
- the implications of the use of the social media as a platform for ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria for growth, national unity and development.

2. Conceptualising Ethno-religious Conflicts

In his conceptual definition, Weber (1971) opines conflict is 'any action that is oriented intentionally to carry out actor's own wish against the resistance of the other party or parties'. To this scholar, conflict ensues when an individual or a group deliberately initiates an action or move that the other party or parties consider(s) inimical to their interest. In Coser's (1956) conception, 'conflict is a struggle over status, power and

scarce resources in which the sole aims of the parties involved are not only to gain the desired value but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals'. Here, Coser sees conflict as having destructive and devastative tendencies. It is a phenomenon that revolves round struggle and unhealthy rivalry for things or objects to which individuals or groups attach importance. Osaghae (2011) notes that these things or objects can exist in the material and non-material forms. The material objects or things could comprise scarce resources such as money, jobs, services, political positions and promotion in both private and public establishments. The non-material objects, on the other hand, include culture, religion and language. As submitted by Ajayi and Buhari (2014:15), a conflict situation ensues when two or more individuals could not agree over an issue. Thus, in a conflict, every party involved seeks to achieve certain objectives such as secure territory, security, access to market, among others (Ajayi and Buhari, 2014: 140). From all these definitions, it suffices to say conflict, although not to be desired, is an essential part of every human society.

Adetoye and Omilusi (2015), in their discussion on ethno-religious conflict, argue that ethnic conflicts are not only restricted to conflicts between members of different groups (inter-group conflict), but can also be observed between or among members of different segments or sub-groups of the same group (such as intra-ethnic conflicts and communal conflicts). Osaghae (2011) observes ethnic conflicts often manifest in form of a survival-of-the-fittest contest which often engenders violence. Ayantayo (2005) claims religious conflict is birthed 'when each of two religious persons occupying the same religious space claims a monopoly of religious truth' and since they cannot hold the same (religious) truth at the same time, there is bound to be opposition, friction, acrimony, incompatibility, hatred, hostility, clash and ultimately conflict or war between them.

Drawing inspiration from the view of Ayantayo (2005), Adetoye and Omilusi (2015) define inter-religious conflict as such that involves disagreement between two religious persons with respect to who or who is not holding absolute religious truth. According to them, this usually manifests when members of religions are engaged in argument which often goes with bickering, controversy, demonstration, debate or squabble over religious beliefs and practices. Jega (2002:35) describes ethno-religious conflict as a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic group and another, or generally amongst ethnic groups, in a multicultural polity such as Nigeria, is characterised by lack of cordiality, heightened mutual suspicions and fears, quarrelsomeness and a tendency towards violent confrontations. In his opinion, any community or polity experiencing ethno-religious tension is in a precarious state of volatility, insecurity and instability. In such society, if care is not taken to reverse or address the situation, any minor imbroglio between or among the members can result in total breakdown of law and order.

From the above, we conceive of ethno-religious conflict as such that involves disagreement, clash and friction, which could be violent or non-violent, between or among individuals or groups belonging to different ethnic or religious camps. Their differences could evolve as a result of their divergent ideological, religious, cultural or linguistic differences.

3. Previous works on Ethno-religious Conflict in Nigeria

Adetoye and Omilusi (2015) examine the impacts of ethno-religious conflicts on democracy in Nigeria from a socio-political perspective. The scholars observe Nigeria is 'a melting pot of ethnic nationalities, class, regions, religions and other socio-cultural markers', hence the pluralistic nature of the country. According to them, the pluralistic nature of the country has in a way done more harm than good to her development, particularly in her democracy. This is because, as submitted by these scholars, the political class has exploited and employed ethnicity and religion as 'symbols of mobilization and instruments of negotiation for patronages and sharing of national resources' (p. 1). Idahosa (2013) explores ethno-religious conflict and peace building in Nigeria, with particular reference to the situation of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. He paints a graphic picture of the ethno-religious crisis situation in Jos, noting in particular the incessant cases of conflict between the majority Christian indigenes and minority Muslim settlers in the city. In his opinion, while every effort by the government at all levels to put a permanent end to this unfortunate situation has been ineffective, there has not been any serious move on the part of the warring groups to address it, hence the high spate of destruction of lives and properties witnessed in the city.

Fawole and Bello (2011) equally attempt a socio-political investigation of the impact of ethno-religious conflict on Nigerian federalism. Of central concern to the discussion of this scholar is how the issue of sharing the national wealth of the country among its component units has been a hydra-headed problem. Fawole and Bello (2011) conclude ethno-religious conflict has retarded true federalism in Nigeria, as ethno-religious bigotry which manifests in forms of language assertion, cultural autonomy and chauvinism permeates and contaminates social relations among its component units.

Sule (2012) examines the role of the mass media in ethno-religious conflicts, particularly as often witnessed in the Northern part of Nigeria and its implication for national development in the country. From a philosophical-religious perspective, the study critically examines news reports and analyses, editorials, advertorials and special columns' contents of some newspapers and news magazines and concludes the mass media contributes immensely to the escalation of conflicts in the Northern region of the country, a development that has negatively affected the socio-economic development

of the region. He further reports that, even in situations where conflicts arise as a result of some other factors, they are usually given religious colourations, thereby making them very difficult and highly problematic to handle.

However, as pointed out earlier, none of these studies has given attention to the subtle inter-ethnic, political and religious *word war* fought among the various ethnic groups in the country, particularly on the social media. Meanwhile, observation has revealed that, even when there appears to be the absence of physical crises among the various ethnic, religious and political groups in the country, the unity and national integration of the country is still threatened as elements of hatred and indignation characterise the social and linguistic interaction of these groups, who often wait for the occurrence of issues of national, ethnic, political and religious interest to manifest. While existing studies have given attention to actual ethno-religious and political conflicts in the country, this study is significantly different in that it draws attention the fact that the absence of physical, political, religious or ethnic crises or conflicts in the country is not tantamount to absolute tranquillity and harmony. This, if not addressed, is a major threat to the nationhood of Nigeria.

4. Theoretical and Analytical Tools: van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis and Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is mainly concerned 'with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language' (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). Commenting on the efficiency of CDA, Rashidi and Souzandehfar (2010) remark that CDA is the right place to perform autopsy on discourse, either written or spoken, so as to uncover the ideologies underlying it. For its suitability, van Dijk's (2004) model of CDA is adopted for analysis in this study. Van Dijk's (2004) framework consists of two main discursive strategies of positive self-representation (semantic macro-strategy of in-group favouritism and 'negative other-representation (semantic macro-strategy of derogation of out-group) which are materialized through some other discursive moves such as actor description, authority, burden (Topos), categorization, comparison, consensus, counterfactuals, disclaimer, euphemism, evidentiality, example/'illustration, generalization hyperbole, implication, irony, lexicalization, metaphor, self-glorification, norm expression, number game, polarization, Us-Them, populism, presupposition, vagueness, and victimization. Above are 27 ideological strategies among which the fundamental dichotomy of 'self positive-representation' and 'other negative representation' stand out.

4.1 Culpeper's Impoliteness theory

In the opinion of Mills (2003: 121), much research has been done on politeness all over the world; however, not much could be said to have been done on impoliteness. According to her, the aforesaid might be as a result of the fact that in most studies, conversation is viewed as a phenomenon that follows the contracts of communication and is harmonious and balanced between the speakers. But there are instances where speakers attack rather than save each other's face in conversations, hence the concept of impoliteness and the need to give scholarly attention to it.

According to Locher and Bousfield (2008: 3), "Impoliteness is a behaviour that is face-aggravating in a particular context''. This definition sees impoliteness and rudeness as synonymous. In reaction to this definition, Culpeper (2008) makes a distinction between impoliteness and rudeness. According to Culpeper, both impoliteness and rudeness are "inappropriate and negatively marked" behaviour. However, the difference between them is that, while impoliteness is intentional, rudeness is unintentional negative behaviour. Therefore, impoliteness is something that is caused intentionally. This position of Culpeper is a sharp contrast to the one maintained by Terkourafi (2008: 61-62) who argues that while impoliteness is unintentional, rudeness is intentional. Culpeper's impoliteness theory is adopted to analyse elements of impoliteness in our data.

Culpeper (1996, 2008) opines that impoliteness is a linguistic behaviour aimed at attacking the face of another. He classifies impoliteness into two different categories: inherent impoliteness and mock politeness or banter. According to him, there are acts that innately threaten one's face regardless of the context of the act; this is called inherent impoliteness. On the other hand, impoliteness that stays on the surface and is not intended to insult anyone is called mock impoliteness (Culpeper 1996: 4). He also outlines five impoliteness super-strategies which are obviously opposites of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness super-strategies. Culpeper (1996) says: "Instead of enhancing or supporting face, impoliteness super-strategies are a means of attacking face" (p. 8). He describes the five super-strategies as follows: *Bald on record impoliteness* - the FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is relevant. This strategy is different from Brown and Levinson's Bald on record in that, for Brown and Levinson, Bald on record is a *politeness* strategy in fairly specific circumstances, *positive impoliteness* - the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants, n*egative impoliteness* - the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants, s*arcasm or mock politeness* -the FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realizations and *withhold politeness* - the absence of politeness work where it would be expected. For example, failing to thank somebody for a present may be taken as deliberate impoliteness (Culpeper 1996: 8-9).

Culpeper (1996) also spells out strategies for negative and positive impoliteness. These strategies are as follows:

Negative impoliteness output strategies:

- *Frighten* - instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur;
- *Condescend, scorn or ridicule* - emphasize your relative power. Be contemptuous. Do not treat the other seriously. Belittle the other (e.g. use diminutives);
- *Invade the other's space* - literally (e.g. position yourself closer to the other than the relationship permits) or metaphorically (e.g. ask for or speak about information which is too intimate given the relationship);
- *Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect* - personalize, use the pronouns 'I' and 'you';
- *Put the other's indebtedness on record.*

Positive impoliteness output strategies:
- *Ignore, snub the other* - fail to acknowledge the other's presence;
- *Exclude the other from an activity;*
- *Disassociate from the other* - for example, deny association or common ground with the other; avoid sitting together;
- *Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic;*
- *Use inappropriate identity markers* - for example, use title and surname when a close relationship pertains, or a nickname when a distant relationship pertains;
- *Use obscure or secretive language* - for example, mystify the other with jargon, or use a code known to others in the group, but not the target;
- *Seek disagreement* - select a sensitive topic. Make the other feel uncomfortable - for example, do not avoid silence, joke, or use small talk;
- *Use taboo words* - swear, or use abusive or profane language;
- *Call the other names* - use derogatory nominations.

Culpeper (2011) sees impoliteness as a multi-disciplinary field of study that has a link with scientific fields such as psychology, sociology, conflict studies, and media. It is thus, a complex and multi-dimensional subject to study (Kuntsi, 2012).

The combination of these theories helps reveal how linguistic tools are employed by different groups, ethnic, political and religious, for instance, in Nigeria to construct identities, ideologies and perception about *others* in four events of national interest in the country.

5. Methodology

The data for this study are online comments and reactions of Nigerians on four most recent happenings in the country that have generated heated reactions and counter reactions among Nigerians. These events are the recent Apostle Suleman's alleged sex scandal with the headline *I stand with Apostle Suleman* with a Canadian-based female musician, the Southern Kaduna killing in the North, the Yoruba-Hausa crisis in Ile Ife and issues surrounding the arrest and detention of Nnamdi Kanu, a force to reckon with in the clamour for the creation of Biafra by the Igbo people in the country, all in 2017. These four events have been purposively selected among many other current ethno-religious issues that have sparked off serious controversies on the Internet among Nigerians because of their popularity and the fact that they cut across the three major ethnic groups in the country. The online comments and linguistic reactions that constitute our data are captured on three popular news and information sites- the Vanguard newspaper online platform, Sahara Reporters and Nairaland.com. The first two are popular newspaper outlets in the country that enjoy unprecedented readership and patronage from a lot of Nigerians, hence it is believed any information got on their platform is authentic; while the third one is a platform that gives many Nigerian youths the opportunity to react to and comment on social and political happenings in the country. The platform has gained much readership in the country, especially among youths, because apart from giving them day-to-day information about the socio-political developments in the country, it is a site that readily serves as a veritable source of job information for the teeming unemployed Nigerian youths. Data are subjected to van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis and Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory.

6. Data Presentation and Analysis

Elements of They (them) versus We (us) Ideology in Online Ethno-religious Conflict among Nigerians

Elements of They (them) versus We (us) ideology permeate the posts and replies to posts of the individuals whose posts are captured for analysis in this study. These pronouns, they/ them on the one hand, and we/us, on the other, represent the conflicting groups- religious and ethnic in the country. These posts and their analysis are presented below:

Example 1
The posts here revolve round the issue of sex scandal Apostle Suleman is purportedly involved in with a Canada-based female musician.

Excerpt 1
Background Post: *Governor Ayodele Fayose of Ekiti State has described the*

adultery allegation against Apostle Johnson Suleman of the Omega Power Ministry by one Miss Stephanie Otobo as a "high-level conspiracy meant to destroy the integrity of the pastor and silence his critical and principled voice of truth and dissent in a nation fast becoming a one-party state".

A number of discursive strategies are employed in the excerpt above to foreground identities and ideological stances. First of the tools is the disclaimer move which is employed by a PDP (People Democratic Party) chieftain and governor, Ayodele Fayose, to vindicate the accused pastor of the alleged rape. It is evident however that beneath the vindication is a political motive of castigating the ruling party, APC (All Progressives Congress) through the discursive tool of *example/illustration* as reflected in the nominal group 'a nation fast becoming a one-party system' which is a reference to the political party in power in Nigeria. In substantiating this ideological stance, Fayose employs the *associate the other with negative aspect impoliteness sub-strategy* in identifying the ruling party with the act of oppression and repression and ultimately truth subversion. This ideological stance is also evident in his statement, as presented in Excerpt 2 below:

Excerpt 2
"*This was the same way they tried to drag the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye, in the mud. The whole world was aghast at how they insulted and ridiculed the highly-revered RCCG General Overseer. But for the outcry from all over the world, they almost bundled out Pastor Adeboye from his position as RCCG General Overseer and could have even arrested the General Overseer of Winners' Chapel, David Oyedepo*".

As a way of further defending the Apostle, in the post above (Excerpt 2), Fayose reminds the readers of how similar political strategies were orchestrated by some undisclosed members of the political class to malign the image of two respected pastors in the country: Adeboye and Oyedepo. As seen in the first excerpt, this text credited to Governor Fayose of Ekiti State, Nigeria, to save the face of the Nigerian pastor, can be seen as a political strategy to cast aspersion on the ruling party whose administration has been greatly condemned by him. This is evident with the use of the *us-them* discursive move as the third person (subject, plural) personal pronoun is repeated three times in the short quote. There is also the complementary use of the tool of presupposition which will make a sympathetic reader conceive of the ruling party (APC) as one which haunts innocent people, especially highly placed Nigerians, like pastors, as the number game played with name calling in the excerpt shows. From the submission of Fayose, one is compelled to infer that the State, presided over by a non-Christian president, is biased in its dealing with religious matters, especially as it relates to Christians and Christianity. This submission is reinforced by his position in his

statement presented in excerpt 3 as follows:

Excerpt 3

"*Should it not interest Nigerians and the international community that up till today, none of those herdsmen that killed thousands of Nigerians in Benue, Enugu, Delta, Ogun, Plateau and Kaduna States have been arrested? Even those arrested in connection with the murder of the Abuja-based female pastor, Eunice Elisha, have been released*".

This statement, which is also credited to the most reported Nigerian governor in media in the last two years, is also laced with a subtle and implicit condemnation of the ruling government in Nigeria, given the game played with number in terms of the reference to 'thousands of Nigerians' purportedly killed by herdsmen across the listed states. There is, therefore, the presupposition that the ruling government of Nigeria is a biased one that is sectional in their provision of security for the citizenry.

Excerpt 4

Post A: People are religiously blind. They claim to worship God when they actually worship their fellow being. Though I exempt the western world where there seems to be wisdom. In Nigeria, even if you call yourself god, before looking back, you'd find that people have been worshiping you! Yes, those who are religiously blind. Must you allow these evil prophets to destroy all your lives before you realize that they're devils? One of them set some of his church attendants ablaze the other time, yet you defended him. Another impregnated almost half of the ladies in his church including married women, you defended him still. This is another one, and Buhari is being accused. Pls how is Buhari connected with this matter? I'm not denying there are good pastors.

Excerpt 5

Post B: 'Just bcos the apostle raised a voice against Fulani herdsmen now they are accusing and trying to bring his name to d mud,,,shame to Nigeria....victory at last for our ordained apostle'

The writer of this Post A employs the *associate the other with a negative aspect* negative impoliteness sub-strategy, describing Fayose, a Christian and other Christians who have displayed their loyalty to Apostle Suleman, as individuals who have shifted their attention from worshipping God to worshipping men, pastors. The author wants to dissociate himself from this practice which, according to him, denotes 'religious blindness'. Apparently, the writer of this post does not share the same religious ideological position with those individuals whose faces he attacks with the post. In his/her response to A's post, B equally employs the same impoliteness strategy to accuse some unnamed individuals who are believed, to either be Muslims or Northerners, who are in support of the nebulous activities of some Fulani herdsmen in

the country as being the masterminds of the ordeal of Apostle Suleman, whom he/she believes is a man ordained by God. The author of this post (B) believes Apostle Suleman's condemnation of the activities of these herdsmen is the reason he is being 'framed up' in the sex scandal.

These accusations and counter-accusations are against the backdrop of the fact that the present administration has come under serious criticism from Nigerians, particularly those from the Southwest and Southeast regions of being biased in her political appointments, as it is widely claimed that the administration is largely made up of men and women from the Northern region, particularly the Hausa-Fulani group where the president hails from. It is, therefore, taken that those who are against 'the man of God' are agents of the State who are protecting the Hausa-Fulani agenda.

Excerpt 6

Why Fayose involved himself in dis saga? His usual and inborn character of always being opposite of the majority will ends him nowhere even in his party. Let's wait and see what is going to happen between the two lovers. When it comes to love affairs few people are exempted no matter the position. Just trust yourself no one is a saint.

The author of this post constructs his/her ideological stance with the discursive move of actor description as s/he bluntly describes Fayose with the noun phrase, *his usual and inborn character of always being opposite of the majority*. The author further employs the tool of metaphor to derogatorily refer to the accused pastor and the accuser as lovers to further discredit Governor Fayose's affiliation to him (the accused pastor). There is, therefore, the presupposition that the author has an allegiance and affinity to the Federal Government, given his reference to Fayose as being anti-the ruling party.

Excerpt 7

Education does not play any roles in many people's life! Yes, those who are religiously blind. Must you allow these evil prophets to destroy all your lives before you realize that they're devils? One of them set some of his church attendants ablaze the other time, yet you defended him. Another impregnated almost half of the ladies in his church including married women, you defended him still. This is another one, and Buhari is being accused. Pls how is Buhari connected with this matter? I'm not denying there are good pastors. But when you see the devilish ones, say it.

This post, in its opening and middle part, appears to be a simple and innocent piece of advice against religious extremism, especially in terms of unquestionable loyalty to pastors. However, the latter part reveals that the number game of reference to some bad pastors is deliberately employed to gather momentum for the accusative question which borders on alleged Buhari's involvement in the religious saga in the country. There is,

therefore, the presupposition that this writer aligns with Buhari as a leader who is disinterested in the victimisation of religious leaders. It can also be inferred from the post that the author has religious bias against Christianity, considering the various examples cited by him/her of pastors who had been involved in one ignoble act or another at different times. If not, he/she could have cited examples of Muslims and particularly Muslim clerics who are also guilty of the allegations pointed out in his/her post.

Excerpt 8

Post C: *I pity those behind all this scam, because God of vengeance will fight for his servant, and all those behind this fake lies will receive their reward and it will be too disastrous.*

Excerpt 9

Post D: *Who determine man of God.is it Fulani that asked him to go into relationship or Buhari that connected two of them.too much hypocrisy in religions nowadays.*

The author of post C, making reference to his Christian ideological belief in God to defend His own, employs *the frighten the other negative impoliteness sub-strategy* to instil fear in the people believed to be behind the predicament of the Apostle (Suleman). He/she threatens *them*-'those behind this scam'- that something disastrous awaits them from God who would reward them for their lies and falsehood against the man in the eye of the storm. The author of Post D, apparently not in *agreement* with the submission of author C, employs *the seek disagreement negative impoliteness sub-strategy to counter his/her position*. He also employs the *condescend, scorn or ridicule* the other negative impoliteness sub-strategy to query the idea of some individuals calling their religious leaders men of God. From his/her question, 'is it Fulani that asked him to go into relationship or Buhari that connected the two of them?', it is clear that he/she associates the Apostle with the scandal.

Excerpt 10

Post E: *mumu that's the only class u belongs to, u are always ln support of evil things what a pity. some 1 in the name of god dupe his follower and spend to prostitute, and he is having a mad dog support good.*

In Post E, the author employs the *use taboo words* positive impoliteness sub-strategy to attack the faces of the supporters of Apostle Suleman as well as those who share his religious ideology. This is apparent in his reference to them as '*mumu*' fools and 'mad dogs'. In the same post, he employs the *associate the other with the negative aspect impoliteness sub-strategy* in accusing them of supporting 'evil things'. Given the ethno-religious polarisation of the country, it is difficult to submit the authors of

these conflicting posts share the same ethnic or religious perception. One can argue that those in support of Apostle Suleman are either Christians or non-Hausa while those against him are either Muslims or Hausa-Fulani.

Example 2
This revolves round the Southern Kaduna killing in Kaduna earlier in 2017.

Excerpt 11
Open your eyes Jan 26, 2017 This not a religious crisis but with inciting comments and propagander it could become one. .it's got nothing to do with president Buhari. This started long before he came into power, point to note ...it's an invasion ! They kill both Christians and Muslims. Best we look above Religious sentiments and stop thinking like Children that cant see the bigger picture. We need to come together as one, Both Christians and Muslims to fight this. Good Day Nigerians!

This excerpt has the discursive move of a disclaimer as the writer attempts a vindication of President Muhammadu Buhari from the accusation regarding his involvement in the activities of the insurgents in Nigeria. With the generalisation achieved by mentioning the two major religious groups in the country, Christians and Muslims, s/he implies that the activities of the insurgents do not suggest loyalty to any religion. He, therefore, constructs them as enemies to all faithful with the polarising pronoun, *they*. The metaphorical use of the word 'children' to mean people with no insight can also be considered as ridicule or condescend the other positive impoliteness sub-strategy purposefully employed to castigate those who consider the insurgents' activities as a religiously motivated one even though this castigation is made subtle by the inclusive use of *we*.

Excerpt 13
Greatman what has Christians not done for peace to reign. A christian will NEVER raise his hand on an unbeliever talk more of his brother or neighbour. Christians has always shown these Muslim love but what do they get in return? If those people killed you knw one of them thats when you know how painful it is. I have come to understand that themuslims just don't want peace.

Evident in this excerpt is the discursive move of *us-them* dichotomy. The writer gathers momentum for his/her conclusion that Muslims are people who do not want peace with the lexicalised emphasis of *never* and the implied reference to Muslim(s) as unbeliever(s).The determiner *these* as found in the noun phrase *these Muslims* is also a lexical pointer to the clear dichotomy constructed by the author of this post between the faithful of the two religions (Islam and Christianity). In his/her ideological stance,

he/she projects Muslims as peace shooters who repay Christians with violence in spite of the love shown to them (by Christians). This is a deliberate deployment of *associate the other with negative aspects positive impoliteness sub-strategy* to ideologically construct a 'terrorist' identity for Muslims as well as their religious beliefs.

Excerpt 14

Yes. Islam is the perfect Religion of Allah, the creator of the heaven and earth and what is in between them. While Muslims are humans following the religion of Islam, and they are not perfect, they make mistakes, they might misinterpreted things, and they blame should go to them personally and not to Islam. Thank u 4 reading!

In the post above, there is the use of a disclaimer device by the writer as a strategic discursive move to defend his/her ideological stance that Islam is a perfect religion which embraces peace. In pursuing this ideological stance, s/he separates the religion from those who practise it, Muslims, who are fallible like every other human being on earth. S/he also employs the discursive tool of actor description to describe Allah as the supreme God and links this religion to Him as a way of establishing that Islam is perfect like its creator, Allah, even if Muslims might be deficient.

Excerpt 15

Islam is created by the devil. They don't value human life at all. This is pathetic and painful. Thank God for the life of Christians who truly fear God and value human life irrespective of where you hail from. Christianity accommodate anybody be he Muslim or pagan but the opposite is the Islam. I don't know why a reasonable human being will be living together with Fulani Jihadist, They are evil and unforgiving like their Grandpa from Daura.

In this post, the author consciously employs the use of *associate the other with negative aspect positive impoliteness sub-strategy* to attack Islam as a religion and Muslims generally. This author makes a clear dichotomy between Islam and Christianity, portraying Islam as a devilish religion through the discursive move of comparison. A clear *us-them* boundary is created between the Christians and the Muslims in Nigeria with the use of the third person plural pronoun, *they*, to refer to Muslims. There is evidently the use of the discursive move of self-glorification as the author portrays Christians as 'God-fearers' and god-fearing, and Muslims as otherwise. The author equally subtly employs the *ridicule the other negative impoliteness sub-strategy* where s/he reduces Fulani Jihadists to non-humans 'I don't know why a reasonable *human being* will be living together with *Fulani Jihadist*' who no sane human should interact with. The author's reference to Daura in his/her post equally has some pragmatic imports. Buhari, Nigeria's president, is from Daura, hence there is a link between him and the 'unforgiving' Fulani Jihadists who promote Islamic ideologies. To the author of this post, Christianity is ideologically peaceful, while Islam

is ideologically violent.

Excerpt 16

No, my friend, u moat have encountered the so- called Muslims who does not understood the teaching of Islam and made one mess then u are judging the whole Islam by them. It is mentioned in the Qur'an that, " whosoever kill an innocent soul it is as if he had kill the whole mankind and who whosoever save a soul it is as if he had save the whole mankind" take the correction pls. U can ask your questions. Anything about Islam. Thank u.

The writer of this post employs the counterfactual tool to debunk the claim of the earlier comment on Islam as being a devilish religion. The metaphorical use of the noun phrase, *my friend*, is a discursive strategy at endearing him/herself to the writer of the earlier post as a way of creating a friendly atmosphere for his/her argument. The tool of evidentiality, therefore, follows as the writer makes reference to the holy book of Islam which forbids Muslims from killing innocent souls. He, therefore, tactically saves the face of Islam as a peaceful religion from possible misbehaviours of Muslims.

Example 3

This centres on the arrest, detention and the clamour for the release of Nnamdi Kanu, a Biafran agitator from the East

Excerpt 17

'The war is over and won by Republic Of Biafra. The north has conceded war defeat and ready to go. Their people from west and north working for the bandits that call itself federal government to leave Republic Of Biafra now'

The secession move of the Eastern Nigerians is a long standing one, dating back to the mid 1960s. This effort has, in few years back, been resuscitated by the effort of a young man called Nnamdi Kanu, who has been imprisoned by the Nigerian government on the grounds of being a threat to national security. This strong will to secede is discursively, ideologically and optimistically constructed by the author of the post above, using the discursive moves of self-glorification and hyperbole. He glorifies the Biafra as the winner of a war yet to break out. The *us-them* dichotomy between the Biafran agitators and the Nigerian State is sharply constructed with the noun phrase, 'their people from west and north' working for the 'bandits that call itself federal government'. In the post, the author employs the *call the other names (derogatory nomination) negative impoliteness sub-strategy*, to refer to the Westerners and Northerners in the country who are not in support of the realisation of the Biafra dream as 'bandits'. This reveals a strong will towards self-actualisation and a pronouncement of a different national identity.

Excerpt 18

You see how stupid you all are in the IPOB? How long will you continue to shout "if you don't release Kanu this and that will happen", just how long? What have you not said and yet the poor silly boy continues to languish in Kuje prisons? The only thing you have not done is to go and slam open the prisons and let him out, that is all you have not done. And if you were brave enough, that small yahoo yahoo boy is not brave at all...

The author of this excerpt also bluntly and aggressively consolidates on the *us-them* dichotomy established by the first author (in Excerpt 17). This is foregrounded with the pronoun phrase *you all* which is used to refer to one of the bodies agitating for Biafra, IPOB. The metaphorical noun phrases, *poor silly boy and yahoo yahoo boy* which are *derogatory names* used to refer to the lead agitator for Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu, is evidently a rhetorical device to make a mess of the secession effort of the Biafrans.

Excerpt 19

Whether you like it or not zoo Nigeria is doomed and Biafra must become a reality. The joke is on you for not reading the hand-writing on the wall - MENE, MENE ...

A critical perusal of the post above reveals the writer is pro-Biafra. This is evident in his/her strong belief in the actualisation of Biafra. This s/he achieves not just directly but also by derogatorily and metaphorically constructing Nigeria as a zoo. The meaning implication of this is an implicit reference to Nigerians as a people less than higher human beings. And since they (the Biafrans) are human beings, they cannot continue to occupy the same space with Nigerians who are 'animals'. A clear dichotomy is, therefore, discursively created between these two peoples who occupy the same geographical space.

Excerpt 20

Blah blahblah, fucking biafraud monkeys go and die or jump in the freaking Lagos lagoon. Fucking retards

This short excerpt is also loaded with details as the discursive move of implication helps interpret 'blah blahblah' as fruitless or unproductive noise towards the actualisation of a sovereign state by the Biafrans. The writer of the post is not mincing words in threatening the faces of the Biafran agitators by referring to them in unprintable words. The coinage *biafraud* which is made to collocate with monkey metaphorically represents the Biafrans negatively as the idioms which revolve around monkey usually connote playing tricks and being dishonest. Here, the writer has combined the tenets of *call the other derogatory names and ridicule the other with*

negative impoliteness strategies to attack the faces of Biafran agitators.

Example 4
This segment analyses posts/reactions on the Yoruba-Hausa clash in Ile-Ife. The researchers randomly selected three posts which are ideologically significant for this section.

Excerpt 21
RIP to the dead. If you criticize the excesses of these northerners now, yorubas will be the first to come for your head and call it "hate speech"

Excerpt 22
We said it, but they didn't listen

Excerpt 23
am just a bini boy observing the fight from Benin City. Uniben to be precise.abegosazee bring that binoculars make we check the people when involve for the fight first before we go track Cynthia for hall 1 then from there we go enter class. OooK. na them them. tinubu boys vsbuhari boys

The three posts above (21-23) have a similar ideological pattern, especially with regard to how the relationship between the Yoruba and Hausa of Nigeria is conceived by other tribes of the country. The *us-them* dichotomy here appears to be separately framed as the Yoruba and Hausa are jointly constructed as a political force or entity against the other ethnic groups in the country.

In Excerpt 21, *you* is metaphorically captured as a smaller and ideologically different force from the purportedly strong force, which is made up mainly of the Hausa and Yoruba who will always form a political alliance with the former. The Yoruba and Hausa are conceived by majority of the other tribes as a single political force in the Nigerian polity. This ideological stance is made clearer in Excerpt 22 which aptly depicts the *us-them* dichotomy. *We* is used to represent the smaller ideological force aside the Hausa-Yoruba camp and *they* represents the Yoruba. The discursive move of implication helps understand the post as an implicit blame on the Yoruba for their allegiance to the Hausa, who in turn have dealt with them (the Yoruba) in the Yoruba-Hausa crisis in Ife, Osun State. In Excerpt 23, the writer metaphorically refers to himself as *just a bini boy* with the implication of expressing delight in watching the 'super powers' collide. The expression *na them them* 'it is them against them' further confirms the ideological construction of the Hausa and Yoruba as a single political force in the Nigerian political system. The final confirmation of this ideological grouping is the reference made to two strong political personalities among the Yoruba and the Hausa, Tinubu and Buhari, respectively.

7. General Discussion and Findings

A combination of van Dijk's CDA and Culpeper's impoliteness theory for analysis in this study helps reveal certain ideological and identity stances in the issues of national concern that have been selected for analysis in this study. This study finds out that issues that border on religion and religious leaders are of national interest in the Nigerian society as they take the attention of both those in the ruling class and those that are ruled. It is also realised in the study that religious issues are offshoots of political matters and happenings in the country. This was made evident as the excerpts analysed on the Apostle Suleman's alleged sex scandal all tilt towards political affiliation and both the political figure that commented and other citizens who reacted all employ the issue as a political tact to either ideologically represent one party as being good or another as being bad.

It is also found in the data analysis that ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria boils down mainly on issues of sectional killing and insecurity. The killings, especially in the Northern part of the country, have constructed an antagonistic block between the faithful of the two major religions, Islam and Christianity, in the country. Excerpts analysed in the data show that the Christians have come to accept Islam as a violent religion which supports indiscriminate killing of people (particularly non-Muslims). There are also other excerpts showing efforts on the part of Muslims to differentiate Islam as a religion of peace from Muslims, who can be deficient as human beings. There is clearly an appeal to people not to see Islam in the light of the malicious attitude of some Muslims.

The third segment of the data which centres on a Biafran agitator for self-determination, Nnamdi Kanu, reveals a clear dichotomy and different ideological stances on the secession move of the Nigerian Easterners. The agitation coming from the supporters of Nnamdi Kanu, as evident in our data presentation and analysis, do not only show their love for him but also their optimism about the realisation of the Biafran State. There is also the construction of Nigeria and her people in a negative sense by the Biafrans, showing a clear diversity within the political entity called Nigeria. There is also a pessimistic view from Nigerians on the Biafran agitation, constructing the move and effort as not just being an unrealistic one but also one championed by 'talkers' rather than 'doers'.

The study also shows that the Hausa and Yoruba in Nigeria are ideologically conceived as a political force against the other tribes in the country. The posts analysed show that the Yoruba are conceived by the other tribes as loyalists to the Hausa on national issues. There is, therefore, an implicit blame or mockery on the Yoruba from non-Yoruba and non-Hausa ethnic groups for the massacre suffered in the hands of the Hausa in the Ife

crisis.

Conclusion

This paper studies online ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria within the ambits of van Dijk's critical discourse analysis and Culpeper impoliteness theory. The combination of the theories helps reveal how linguistic tools are employed by different groups, ethnic, political and religious, for instance, in Nigeria to construct identities and perception about *others*, as well as ideologies in four events of national interest in the country. These events are the recent Apostle Suleman's alleged sex scandal which generated the slogan 'I stand with Apostle Suleman' on the social media, with a Canadian-based female musician, the Southern Kaduna killing in the North, the Yoruba-Hausa crisis in Ile Ife and issues surrounding the arrest, detention and the clamour for the release of Nnamdi Kanu, a force to reckon with in the agitation for the creation of Biafra by the Igbo people in the country, all in 2017. The study which realises different ideological stances across these issues submits that issues of national interest can be well understood through an investigation of discursive patterns in online news and the reactions they generate. The study thus concludes online ethno-religious conflict has a lot of implications for the continued existence of Nigeria as a united state, hence there is a need for all involved in the 'Nigeria Project' to fashion out peaceful ways of ensuring ethno-religious matters in the country are carefully managed so that they do not degenerate into an intractable situation.

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

POSTURE VERB NOMINALISATION IN LIKPAKPALN (KONKOMBA)

Author: **Abraham Kwesi Bisilki**
Institutional Affiliation: Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Education, Winneba
Department of Linguistics, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Current Status: Lecturer
Mailing address: College of Languages Education, University of Education, Winneba
Email address: bisilki@yahoo.com or bisilki@hku.hk

Bio Statement: **Abraham Kwesi Bisilki** holds a Bachelor of Education (Arts) from the University of Cape Coast and M. Phil in Applied Linguistics from the University of Education, Winneba; both institutions in Ghana. He is a lecturer at the Department of Applied Linguistics of the University of Education, Winneba. He is currently a doctoral candidate at the Department of Linguistics, The University of Hong Kong. His research interests include general grammatical descriptions, sociolinguistics and language policy issues. His researches have mostly dwelt on data from Likpakpaln (Konkomba), a little-researched Mabia (Gur) language spoken in northern Ghana.

MARKING EXHAUSTIVITY IN DAGBANI

Author: **Abdul-Razak-Inusah**
Institutional Affiliation: University of Ghana
Current Status: Tutor
Mailing Address: Tamale College of Education, Box 1 E/R, Tamale
Phone number: +233 244772688
Email address: i.razak29@hotmail.com
ainusah29@gmail.com

Bio Statement: **Abdul-Razak-Inusah** is currently a tutor at the Department of Languages, Tamale College of Education, Tamale, Ghana and a PHD Linguistics candidate at the Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana. His research interests include Dagbani linguistics and other Gur languages of Ghana as well as language teaching and oral literature.

Author: **Edward Salifu Mahama**
Institutional Affiliation: University for Development Studies, Tamale
Current Status: Lecturer
Mailing address: University for Development Studies, Tamale
Phone number: +233 243821111
Email address: edsalifu@yahoo.co.uk

Bio Statement: **Dr. Edward Salifu Mahama** is currently a lecturer at the University for Development Studies and the Director of the Institute of Interdisciplinary Research and Consultancy Services (IIRaCS), University for Development Studies, Tamale. His research interests include English and French linguistics and Sociolinguistics.

FRAMING AND PERSPECTIVES: EXPLORING THE RHETORICAL FUNCTIONS OF THEMATIC CHOICES IN NIGERIAN EDITORIALS ON TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

Author: **Bukola Alfred**
Institutional Affiliation: Obafemi Awolowo University
Current Status: Lecturer
Mailing address: Department of English
    Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
Email address: byaalfred@gmail.com

Bio Statement: **Bukola Alfred** is a Lecturer in the Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. She earned her B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. in

the Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, where she currently teaches. Her research focus interest is in the areas of discourse-grammar, semantics and (multimodal) semiotics. Her email-address is byaalfred@gmail.com, or bukolaalfred@oauife.edu.ng.

Author:	**Rotimi Taiwo**
Institutional Affiliation:	Obafemi Awolowo University
Current Status:	Professor
Mailing address:	Department of English
	Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
Email address:	ferotai@yahoo.com

Bio Statement: **Rotimi Taiwo** is a Professor of English Language at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. His research interest is in the areas of Critical Discourse Analysis and New Media Studies. His email-address is ferotai@yahoo.com or rtaiwo@oauife.edu.ng.

IDEOLOGIES AND IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES IN ONLINE ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AMONG NIGERIANS

Author:	**Temitope Michael Ajayi**
Institutional Affiliation:	Linguistics and African Languages Department, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
Email address:	michealtemitope@yahoo.com

Author:	**Ganiu Abisoye Bamgbose**
Institutional Affiliation:	University of Ibadan, Nigeria

MEANING MODALS: AN INQUIRY INTO
THE SEMANTIC CONTENT OF SOME ENGLISH MODALS

Author:	**Iyabode Omolara Akewo Nwabueze**
Institutional Affiliation:	National Open University of Nigeria
Current Status:	Professor
Mailing address:	Department of English
	National Open University of Nigeria
Email address:	akewoauthe@gmail.com

Bio Statement:

Iyabode Omolara Akewo Nwabueze is a Professor of English Language at the National Open University of Nigeria. She is also the Director of the Benin Study Centre of the National Open University of Nigeria, where she runs the affairs of the University on a day to day basis, representing the University Vice Chancellor at the location. She is an acknowledged seasoned scholar of international repute who has disseminated her words through many national and international fora. She has also attended and presented papers in many national and international conferences. She is currently coordinating a festschrift in honour of Prof M. T. Lamidi of University of Ibadan, along with another colleague from University of Calabar. She has also published creative works in the three literary genres of poetry, drama and prose.

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