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CONTENT

SECTION B: LITERATURE

Lexical choices and Ideology in Nigeria's Security and Development Discourse in the Nigeria's Media

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Abstract

Language as a veritable means of communication not only expresses social realities but also communicates ideologies. The language habits of a community shape how members of that community perceive and interpret social realities. As the media's tool for social representation and ideological construct of realities, language shapes people's social, political and cultural viewpoints and influences their perception of events in the real world. This study therefore, investigates Lexical choices and ideology in Nigeria's security and development discourse in Nigeria's media. It adopts the theoretical insights offered by Van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory (ideological square) and Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG) transitivity system to identify ways Nigerians use lexical items to construct identities and represent the polarity among various groups as 'Us' and 'Them' in issues of security and national development discourse. Data for the study were sourced from online versions of the Nigerian newspapers, purposively selected to enable the researcher achieve the research objectives. The findings reveal that language users use lexical choices to depict polarity, blame game, stereotypes, ethnic slurs that enact, reproduce, and legitimate insurgency, banditry and violence in security and development discourse in Nigeria. The study is significant because of the insights and methodological approach it offers the researchers to interrogate security and development discourse in Nigeria from critical viewpoints and proffer solution to different manifestations of insecurity in the country.

Keywords: socio-cognitive, ideological square, transitivity, discourse, security.

Introduction

Nigeria as a nation since her independence in 1960 has had to grapple with different socio-political experiences ranging from corruption and mismanagement of public resources, human rights abuse, electoral malpractices, ethno-religious crisis, to resource control resulting in Niger Delta crisis. However, for the last decade, the country has faced one of the greatest challenges in her history; the problem of insecurity. The security threats have come in varied forms ranging from Boko Haram attack in the north east, marauding Fulani herdsmen in the middle belt region, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) clashes with security agency in the south east and kidnapping across the country. The Security challenge has threatened the desires and aspirations of many Nigerians for positive change in different sectors of our national life and economy.

The prevailing security situation in Nigeria and how it is

affecting development at all levels has dominated discourse in the media in recent times. Newspapers and social media platforms (Facebook and X platform formerly known as twitter) have become the medium by which people ventilate their opinions on various national issues, including that of security and national development. (In)security and its intricate effect on development in Nigeria as projected in the media has generated a lot of argumentation. For instance, the way a member of a group such as Miyetti Allah would speak of insecurity in Nigeria would clearly project the ideological representation of the group's perception of the real world as regards security and development. The same thing would happen with Sheikh Gumi's views and Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's perception of security in Nigeria. Needless to say then that language is central to ideological discourses, and herein lies the import of lexical choices. Lexicalization or lexical choices is concerned with the choice of words by speakers or writers which provides listeners or readers the cues for interpretation of meaning.

At the centre of all these media conversations are ideological positions held by individual groups that make up the Nigerian nation. On the basis of their group affinities and identities, groups try to project their perspective on the security challenge and its concomitant effect on their membership of the Nigerian nation. These conversations which are not innocent or value free (Van Dijk, 2003) have shown what Van Dijk's (2012) describes as the intricate relationship between language and ideology.

The security situation in Nigeria has worsened in the recent past and Nigerians grapple with the situation as it affects development in the country. Thus, security issues in Nigeria has elicited a lot of opinions and argumentation in the media and various participants in discourse project their opinions as group members which further polarize the country into in-group and out-group (Us and Them). These in-group and out-group membership present ideologies that manifest the ideological constructs of group members' socially shared representation. Thus, looking at language and ideologies as the centre of discourse in this study, the paper investigates lexical choices and ideologies in Nigeria's media construction of security and development discourse with the aim of showing how language users present ideologies using lexical choices. Theoretical insights offered by Van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive theory (ideological square) and Halliday's (1978, 1985) systemic functional linguistics (SFL) system of transitivity are relied upon to identify how Nigerians construct and represent identities of 'Us' as against 'Them' in security and development discourse in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

This section will explain some concepts relevant to this work. These are language and ideology, legitimization of ideology and security development in Nigeria.

Language and Ideology

Previous studies that have investigated language and ideology in Nigeria include: Olowe (1993), Taiwo (2007), Chiluwa (2011), Ehineni (2014), Olusegun (2015), Ugwuona (2015), Ajewole-Orimogunje &Oyelekan, (2016), Abaya (2019), Krisagbedo, Eze & Mamah (2021) and Bukola (2021). In this study, we interrogate the way underlying ideologies, socially shared representations, mental models (Van Dijk, 2012) and identities may influence the structure of discourse on security and development discourse in Nigeria's media; and also note how language plays crucial role in portraying the underlying ideologies in discourse. Therefore, this study is significant for it offers critical insights into underlying ideologies inherent in language use.

Language as a veritable means of communication not only expresses social realities but also communicates ideologies. Consequently, language habits of a community shape how members of that community perceive and interpret social realities (Halliday, 1978; Ayodele, 2020). Van Dijk (2003) states that language is not experienced in isolation but rather experienced in relation to context– which entails the background knowledge, lived experiences of language users (Halliday, 1985) or mental models of the participants involved in discourse, the socio-cultural context (Van Dijk, 2012), the psychological context and even the linguistic context of the speech event are constituting factors to how language is used (Halliday, 1978:28). Taiwo (2008:20) affirms that language shapes the social realities of individuals and groups and as such, it is a crucial social practice that is influenced by ideologies. As a form of social action, ideologies are always determined by values and social norms by conventions and social practices and always delimited and influenced by power structures and historical processes (Wodak, 1995).

Language and ideology are crucial elements in discourse. Ideology is a complicated and elusive term with different implications and interpretation according to context (Ajewole-Orimogunje &Oyelekan, 2016). However, it is a social dimension that explains what kind of groups, relation between groups and institutions that are involved in the development and reproduction of ideologies. The discourse dimension of ideologies explains how ideologies influence our daily texts and talk, how we understand ideological discourse and how discourse is involved in the reproduction and legitimation of ideology in society. Language plays a fundamental role in the daily expression and reproduction of ideologies (van Dijk, 2012). Ideologies influence the various levels of discourse structures, from intonation, syntax and images to the many aspects of meaning, such as topics, coherence, presuppositions, metaphor and argumentation (ibid). According to Destutt de Tracy, ideology is a system of ideas, and especially with the social, political or

religious ideas shared by a social group. Olowe (1993, p. 3) stressing further, ideology means belief systems that helps to justify the actions of a dominant group. It is further argued that ideologies are embedded in texts and also asserts that formulation of ideologies in their social reproduction are discourses, which include language use, text, talk and as manifested in media (Fairclough 1992, 1995; van Dijk, 1998, p.8).Thus, language and ideology are intricately related (Van Dijk, 2012).

As a system of ideas of social groups and movements, ideologies not only make sense in order to understand the world from the perspective of the group but also as a basis for social practices of the group (Van Dijk, 2014). Thus, ideologies emerge from group conflict and struggle and they typically pitch 'Us' against 'Them' . One of the crucial social practices influenced by ideologies is language use and discourse (Fairclough, 1995). Our language use as members of a group, expresses ideological based opinions, hence, consists of shared social beliefs or social collectivities (Van Dijk, 2012). Van Dijk (2012, 2014) claims that we learn most of our ideological ideas through various forms such as listening to parents and peers, reading and listening to other group members, watching television, involve in everyday conversation with other group members and many other form of text and talk are medium through which we learn or taught ideologies. Therefore, our discourses on (in)security and

development in Nigeria explicitly aim at inculcating positive ideologies into group members using language as medium for promotion of security, peace and unity.

Ideologies are socio-cultural beliefs and knowledge, socially shared representation that influence various ways individuals or groups use language as members of a group. As the basis of social representations of the beliefs shared by a group, ideology is often expressed in the form of self and other representations and must be seen as the social collectivities of group members (Van Dijk, 2014).Therefore, the conversation on the prevalent issues of insecurity and its concomitant effect on development in Nigeria could be described in terms of the ideological stance of the various ethnic, religious and political groups who, on account of their group membership and solidarity, have come to see other groups as 'Them'.

The Role of Language use in Legitimization of Ideology

The role of language use in legitimatization of ideology is crucial to a study of this nature. Participants in security and development discourse in Nigeria express their ideological perceptions using peculiar lexical items. Thus, the choice of lexical items whether consciously or unconsciously signals the discourse speaker or writer's intention or attitude towards a particular subject matter. Mayr (2008, p. 28) avers that lexical items are the most obvious and most thoroughly studied form of ideological expression.

Lexicalization, for instance, is an important means of reproduction of ideology in media discourse. Language is very crucial in meaning generation and as such, Anigbogu (2016) opines that human perceptions and ideas are communicated more effectively through the use of language. The effective use of language plays vital roles in educating, informing, entertaining and enlightening people which in turn contributes in forming the mental model of the people. Halliday & Metthiessien (2004) say that language construes human experiences and enacts our personal and social relationships with other people within the society.

The language of the media is not 'innocent or value free' (Van Dijk, 2012) or can never be ideologically 'neutral' (Ajewole-Orimogunje & Oyelekan, 2016: 14) rather, each discourse in the media accounts for a 'two sided act' in that, it is continuously oriented towards an addressee, and it is conditioned by who the speaker is and those whose speech are meant to address (ibid). They affirm that the meaning of a word can never be affixed once and for all, as it actively negotiated through the reciprocal relationship between the addresser and addressee. Ajewole-Orimogunje & Oyelekan (2016) opine that the ideological content of news reflects the interest of the major investors and managers of the press agency, therefore, perceptions, opinions or mental models of a speaker is determined by his/her ideology.

Security and Development in Nigeria

According to the UNDP (1994), security may be defined to include such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. Security means protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or communities (Godly & Wilfred, 2012).In this paper, we adopt the definition of security by Umaru et al (2015) as the freedom from danger and threats or a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest to enable it improve the well-being of its citizens. Security threats have effects on safety and well-being of citizens, commerce, education, employment and over all development of a nation.   On the other hand, development connotes progressive change in every aspect of life (Godly & Wilfred, 2012). Thomas (2000, 2004) views development as a process of change. It is a structural and functional transformation of economies and societies.   Both concepts generally have to do with the dynamics of positive change, and are indeed critical factors in national development.

Presently in Nigeria, the level of insecurity has become a threat to development. The Nigerian society, for instance, is getting more insecure by the day; violent crimes such as boko haram insurgency, kidnapping, rape and so on have become common in the present-day Nigeria. These incidences of insecurity have the potential to disrupt human needs

resources, production processes, critical infrastructures, services and product outlets which are essential instrument for development. Thus, a major goal of this paper is to unravel through Lexical choices the language strategies that can moderate the national discourse on insecurity, reduce the mutual antagonism among the various groups in the country, to the end that an enabling environment for national development can be fostered.

Language as a viable instrument is used by discourse participants on security matters to discuss methods or measures to restructure security architecture in the country in order to engender development, peace and unity. Security and development discourse, therefore, chronicle on how discourse analysts on security issues project opinions on the basis of discrimination, polarization and ideological perception that pitch 'Us' against 'Them'. Beard (2000,p. 2) avers that language is used by those who wish to gain power, those who wish to exercise power and those who wish to keep power. Therefore, language is used virtually to do all things.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts an eclectic approach characteristic of a critical discourse analytic style. It adopts the theoretical insights offered by Van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive theory (ideological square) and Halliday's (1978, 1985) systemic functional linguistics(SFL) transitivity system to identify how Nigerians construct identities and represent the polarity among various group as 'Us' and 'Them' in the discourse of security and national development. The Ideological Square comprises the semantic macro strategies propounded by Van Dijk (1998) which provides the features for positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. The ideological square emphasizes the positive 'Us' and de-emphasizes the positive 'Them'; similarly, it emphasizes the negative 'Them' and de-emphasizes the negative 'Us'.

In elaborating further on this theoretical concept, Van Dijk (1998) encapsulates the twin strategies of positive, 'in-group' representation and negative 'out-group' representation. Halliday's (1978, 1985, 2014) systemic functional linguistics (SFL) knowledge were useful in interrogating the implicit ideologies inherent in select text and deciphering the rhetorical strategies employed by texts writers to show that language interpretation is not just centred on context alone but also views language as a form of social practices (Fairclough, 1992) that reveal identities and ideological stance of the texts producers. Van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive theory is the theoretical base of this study and it draws insights from SFL analytical approach to explicate language, ideology and how texts producers thematize, frame or topicalize issues on security and development discourse to reveal hidden ideologies through their various lexical choices.

Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive and qualitative research. The population for the study consisted of twenty (20) excerpts purposively selected from five online versions of the Nigerian newspapers (Daily Post, Nigerian Tribune, Guardian News, Sahara Reporter and Vanguard News) and social media platforms (Facebook and X platform).The select excerpts were sourced to show security situation in the country as projected in the media between 2020 and 2023. Purposive sampling technique was used to select excerpts in line with the objective of identifying the ideological constructs and transitivity process that reveal group identities as shaped by social structure, ethnic and political lining behind security and development discourse in Nigeria. The researchers chose these data source because of their availability and easy accessibility to wider discourse participants.

The analysis is done within the theoretical prism of Van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive theory (ideological square) and Halliday's (1978, 1985) systemic functional linguistics (SFL) with special reference to transitivity or process type. The ideological square was used to investigate the polarization that separate 'Us' against 'Them'; hence, employ polarity, blame game, stereotypes, ethnic slurs to enact, reproduce, legitimate and resist insurgency, banditry and violence in security and development discourse in Nigeria. Through the system of transitivity or process type, the researchers engage thematization, lexicalization, pronominalization, nominalization and demonstratives as lexical choices to project opinions that pitch in-groups and out-groups whose mental models presents 'Us' as against 'Them' in security and development discourse in Nigerian media.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section of the study is segmented into two: ideological discourse and transitivity or process type for ease of analysis.

Ideological Discourse

Ideologies are normative ideas or beliefs typically shared by members of groups or societies which underpin individuals' or groups' understanding of their world and shape their mental models (Ayodele, 2020). As a system of ideas constituted as mental models, ideologies provide the mental constructs for the think processes or cognitive process that shape the perception and behaviour of a group. However, language and ideology are crucial concepts to this study.

Nigeria is currently enduring a rise in (in)security and as such, there are dominant political, religious and ethnic ideologies that shape the mental models of social interactants on security discourse. Different parts of the country have become regular violent hotspots to attacks. The key violent drivers are either distinct to regions or cut across various

locations. For instance, there are cases of banditry in the north-west, boko haram in the north-east, farmers-herders clash in the north central, violent secession agitations in the south-east, kidnapping and extra-judicial killing across the south west and other parts of the country and Niger Delta militancy in the south-south (Ocha, 2023). These violent conflicts have necessitated discourse across the breadth of the country, as well as alignment, identities and group solidarity among commentators in the media as group members whose interests align with groups' ideological perception. This is expressed in discourse through thematization, lexicalization and ideological argumentation. These are discussed in turn:

Thematization

Tooba (2016) thematization is the process of arranging theme-rheme patterns in a text. It is the manner clausal entities are structured in text. Ayodele (2020) refers to thematization as the syntactic positioning of participants which reflects clausal entities in the pre-verb and post-verb positions. Theme/rheme plays a major role in organizing the message and enabling it to be communicated and understood clearly (Halliday, 1994). Theme/rheme is organization in clause that can be manipulated along with units of information, Given and New to achieve a rhetorical purpose and reflects a specific angle of telling a story (Halliday, 2004). Theme and rheme analysis has attracted attention in information structuring

for they bring cohesion and coherence in discourse. The basic premise is that sentences consist of themes, which present known, Given, context-dependent information and rheme which present New, context-independent information. Belmonte & McCabe (1998) state that whatever is chosen to be the first place, will influence the hearer/readers' interpretation of everything that comes next in the discourse since it will constitute the initial textual context for everything that follows. Textual analysis is the analysis of text in terms of its textual features or texture that is why discourse analysts present clausal entities that projects into propositional relation that group participants as Us and Them. Let's consider the following examples:

Text 9   Those insurgents in the south east are criminals, arsonists and rebels claiming they want their own country. No, we will not allow them. Nigerian government has to stand out,   fight them and give them want they want.

Text 10   Boko Haram are terrorists, in fact, all Muslims are terrorists. They are the ones causing security problem in Nigeria.

Text 12   Boko Haram and its offshoot the Islamic State of West Africa (ISWA) continue to be   the cause of insecurity in Nigeria.

Texts 9, 10 and 12 present analytical categories projected to account for social identities inherent in multi-ethnic nation such as Nigeria. In the texts above, the text writers

thematize the initial clausal elements to capture the attention of the readers. The initial elements of the clauses "*those insurgents in the south east; boko haram terrorists and boko haram and its offshoots, the Islamic state of west Africa*" form the themes. The information is structured in consonance with the journalistic style of presenting the most striking part of the discourse as headlines to attract readers' attention. The themes and the subjects in the above clauses are conflated (Thompson, 2004) as 'those insurgents', 'boko haram terrorist' etc are both the themes and subjects of the sentences. The themes or Given information in these clauses are followed by verbal processes of being and sensing which is capable of expressing the lived experiences of the writers hence, presenting ideological perception. The texts writers consciously or unconsciously organized the message by choosing marked themes as special resource to signal the perpetrators of insecurity in Nigeria. The elements in thematic positions here attract readers' attention more than elements in rhematic position (Halliday, 2004). The elements in thematic positions of the clauses help to unlock the meaning-potential and uncover the socially shared meanings, beliefs, opinions or ideological representation as shared in the media as represented in the texts. Again, the consistent thematic positioning or fronting of 'boko haram', ' Fulani herdsmen', ' Islamic terrorists', 'IPOB terrorists', 'Fulani militants' as presented in the excerpts, show that security discourse in Nigeria is presented based on the ideologies of

the texts speakers or writers and nominalization involving actors or perpetrators of activities capable of breeding insecurity in this manner, foreground ethnophaulic perception of security and its concomitant effect on development in the country.

In a similar manner, the rhemes are the New information in the clauses. They serve as complement and present the readers with the new proposition of the clauses. The elements that occupied the complement positions in texts 9 and 10 are the rhemes of the clauses and they helped the texts to cohere with the 'Given' information. Coherence refers to the way a group of clauses or sentences relate to the context (Halliday and Hassan, 1976), that is, they make the rheme "stick together" with the themes (Reid, 2000:116). For instance, "criminals, arsonists and rebels" in texts 9 and 'terrorists' in text 10 showed relationship that exist between the themes and the rhemes in meaning generation; thus, agrees with Halliday (1994) that each clause conveys a message that has two parts, i.e., what comes first or the theme and what comes last or the rheme.

Lexicalization

Lexicalization is a major and well-known domain of ideological expression, and at the local level of analysis, speakers need to express underlying concepts and beliefs in specific lexical items (Van Dijk, 1998: 25, 2012). Van Dijk's (1998) posits that best known in studies of ideology and language, is the analysis of lexical

items. The choice of words is important in providing readers with cues for interpreting events (Van Leeuwen, 1995). Choices of words define how we perceive the actions and the intentions of participants in speech event and convey the message that the producer of the text intended readers to receive. Lexical items construct particular ideological representations of experiences or events. Apart from experiential function of language, lexis has expressive value implying the producer's positive or negative evaluation of participants and events. Therefore, the structure of lexical item can be regarded as ideological based. Richardson (2007, p. 47), "words convey the imprint of society and of value judgments in particular – they convey connoted as well as denoted meanings". The selection of word-meaning through lexicalization is one of the major dimensions through which media fashion ideologies. Lexicalization is used to signal ideological difference that presents Us and Them. Lexicalization often indicates a key concept or preoccupation that gives certain meanings to what the text writer intends to convey (Fairclough, 1989; Fowler, 1991).

The importance of lexicalization in media discourse can never be over-emphasized, security and development discourse in Nigeria inclusive. Lexical items around the concept of insecurity and violence are enacted through repetition of words such as criminals, arsonists, bandits, robbers, kidnappers, rapists, criminal gangs, malicious ethnic jingoists,

insurgents and intense preoccupation with violence and unrest caused by security challenges which are all suggestive to positive self and negative other-presentations. Lexical items have categorizing function, sorting concepts into strictly defined categorical relationships between classes of concepts. Martins (1992), Lexemes dichotomize social processes into two groups, however, in security and development discourse in Nigeria, participants presents ideological dichotomy by polarizing issues as US and THEM (positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation).

Positive Self-presentation and Negative Other-presentation with Lexicalization

This strategy typically gives biased accounts in favour of the speaker's or writer's interest (self) while blaming negative situations on the opponents (other) (Van Dijk, 2006). This micro strategy is presented in this study through lexicalization below.

Lexemes Presenting Positive Self-presentation

Our warriors in forests our brothers

Christian lawyer our own security outfit

Lexemes Representing Negative Other-presentation

Rebels
Arsonists

Islamic   terrorists,
blood suckers,

Criminal   gangs
Fulani militants,

boko   haram   terrorists,
IPOB terrorists,

malicious   ethnic   jingoists
marauding Fulani herdsmen

soldiers causing criminalities are
Christians

The context of use of some of these lexical items listed above are illustrated in the texts below:

Text 3   Fulani *militants* unlash terror on Christians. They are <u>blood suckers</u>

Text 4   Sheik Abubakar Gumi said that soldiers that are involved in most criminalities are not Muslims, they are Christians

Text 5   <u>Bandits</u> are our people, vote leaders who won't fight them

Text 6   Don't vote for politicians who will attack, kill bandits; they're our <u>warriors in forests</u>, Gumi tells northerners

Text 7   We are still suffering from organized attack by <u>criminal gangs</u> and <u>malicious ethnic</u>

<u>Jingoists</u>

Text 8   Senator Adamu Bulkachuwa: Those insurgents in the south east are <u>criminals, arsonists</u> and <u>rebels</u> claiming they want their own country.

No, we will not allow them. Nigerian government has to stand out, fight them and give them want they want

Text 15   <u>Islamic terrorists</u> kill a *Christian lawyer*, kidnap four nuns in Nigeria

The underlined words in the above excerpts show how lexicalization is used in projecting group ideologies by presenting 'Us' group as good and 'Them' group as bad, hence, positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. The texts reveal the employment of lexical items, the 'Us' group used words such as: 'our warriors', 'our people', 'our security outfit', 'Christian lawyer', 'our warriors in forests' to project self while the 'Them' group is presented in bad light using lexical items such as: 'malicious ethnic jingoists', 'Islamic terrorists', 'east home of criminals, 'criminal gangs', 'arsonists', 'rebels', 'Fulani militants', 'Muslim terrorists', 'blood   suckers',   'robbers', 'kidnappers'. These lexical items are used by participants in the texts above to express the ideologies of the dominant group as against the marginalized group. Thus, lexical choices in media discourse are ideological based and we infer from (Fowler & Hodge, 1979:188) that lexical choices in media texts are consciously   or   unconsciously principled and systematic to reflect groups' ideologies.

Lexicalization   further   presents social   representation   by   using pronominals such as: 'us', 'we', 'our' 'I' to   present   the   in-group   (self) positively as against the out-group

'Them' (other) negatively, however, speakers also use pronominal such as: 'those', 'them', 'their' 'they' as lexical item to signal distance. In this study, nominal expressions such as 'Miyetti Allah', ' ethnic jingoists', 'criminals', 'arsonists', 'boko haram' 'Fulani herdsmen', 'Fulani militants', 'rebel', 'criminal gangs' present ideological viewpoints of groups suggestive of identities and social structure that construct inequality and accentuates the polarization of Nigeria along ethnic, political and religious lines. More so, demonstrative pronouns co-existing with noun phrase or standing as an independent element are used as pointers to the nouns they modify and indicating distance between the in-group and out-group (Ayodele, 2020). For instance, pronominal such as 'those' in 'those insurgents' (text 9), 'they' and 'them' in texts 9 and 10 respectively distance the speakers' groups from the target group. Finally, in the context of ideological dichotomies, pronouns indicate social, psychological and ideological distance, to a large extent, language generally demonstrate the power to construct people who do not belong to an in-group as 'other'.

Transitivity Analysis

Halliday & Metthiessien (2004), the ideational metafunction of language is realized through the system of transitivity or process types. It discusses how participants in discourse present real world experiences in language. Transitivity choices will be related to the dimension of field, with the choice of process types and participants roles seen as realizing interanctants' encoding of their experiential reality (Eggins, 2004). Halliday (1978, 1985) explains transitivity in terms of process and divides these processes into six types: material process, mental process, relational process, verbal process, behavioural process and existential process. However, three of the six processes will be discussed in this study, and instances of the three process types (material, relational and verbal) in texts are discussed below:

Material Processes

Material process of transitivity describes the process of *'doing'*, usually concrete, tangible actions. The basic meaning of material processes is that some entity does something, undertakes some actions (Eggins, 2004). Let us discuss the excerpts below:

Text 15   Islamic terrorists kill Christian lawyer, kidnap four nuns in northern Nigeria

Texts 17   Governor Ortoms mourns as Fulani herdsmen kill scores in Benue fresh attack

Text 19 suspected Fulani herdsmen have killed 548 people in repeated attacks on Irigwe communities of Bassa Local Government Council of Plateau State in four years

Islamic terrorists	Kill	Christian lawyer	Kidnap	Four nuns	In northern Nigeria
Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Pr: material	Goal	Circ: location
Governor Ortoms	mourns	Fulani herdsmen	kill	Scores	in Benue fresh attack
Actor	Pr: material	Agent	Pr: material	Goal	Circ: location
Suspected	Fulani herdsmen	have killed	548 people	in repeated attacks	on Irigwe communities
	Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Circ: manner	Circ: location

The table above presents the role of Actors as the doer (Islamic terrorists, Governor Ortoms, Fulani herdsmen), the ones who do or undertake the actions. Thus, Islamic terrorists, Governor Ortom, Fulani herdsmen are all the doers of the actions reflected in the processes of 'have killed', 'mourns', 'kill' and kidnap in the clauses above. It also identified the clausal participants of Agent who initiates the action as presented in (text 17), the one who made the action 'kill' happen. The material processes in this analysis had shown the consequences of the action performed by the Actor who conflate as the subjects of the clauses to the 'Goal' 548 people, scores and Christian lawyer who received the effect of the actions.

Relational Processes

Relational process of transitivity expresses the process of *'being'.* Eggins (2004) refers to relational processes as a process that covers the many different ways in which 'being' can be expressed in English clause. The relational process is classified by the basic structural difference between attributive and identifying processes, exemplified initially for the

intensive sub-type (Eggins, 2004). Intensive attributive process involves establishing a relationship between two terms where the relationship is expressed by the verb 'Be' or a synonym (ibid). In attributive sub-type, a quality, classification or descriptive epithet (Attributive) is assigned to a participant (carrier). The carrier is always realized by a noun or nominal group (Eggins, 2004). The attributive intensive is that 'x' is a member of the class 'a'. Let's consider the clauses below:

Text 1   We are setting up our own security outfit, theirs is not working

Text 10   Boko Haram are terrorists, in fact, all Muslim are terrorists.

We	are setting up	Our own security outfit	theirs is not working
Carrier	Pr: intensive	Attribute	

All Muslim	Are	Terrorists
Carrier	Pr: intensive	Attribute

In the description of attributive intensive, the attribute is a quality or epithet ascribed to the carrier, i.e. 'x' carries the attribute 'a'. in the table above, the carrier is realizes by the nominal group (all Muslim, we) and the attribute is also realized by noun or nominal group (terrorists and our own security outfit). The essential characteristics of the attributive intensive and for all attributive relational processes are that an attributive clause is not reversible. This means that there is no passive form of the clause: the subject cannot conflate with the role of carrier (Eggins, 2004). That is, after repositioning of the constituents of the clause above, with the subject (always the carrier) moved to clause final position and the attribute moved to clause initial position, we may have semantically inadequate structure like the ones below:

Our own security outfit	are setting up	We
Attribute	Pr: intensive	Carrier

Or we   may likely not have:

Terrorists	Are	All muslim
Attribute	Pr: intensive	Carrier

The table above shows that both individual and groups are often categorized with regards to the attributes theyposses and characteristics they are identified with. In all, the speaker represented by 'self' or 'Us' perceives the 'other' or 'Them' (target) is a representation of what they have experienced of them in the cause of their relationship (Ayodele, 2020).

Verbal Processes

Verbal process of transitivity expresses the process of 'saying'. It is characterized by the participant roles as it relates to the verbal process of the 'sayer' (the speaker) and 'receiver' (addressee) and the 'verbiage' what is said. Halliday (1985; Eggins, 2004), a verbal process typically contains three participants: sayer, receiver and verbiage. The 'sayer' is the participant responsible for the verbal process, the receiver is the participant to whom the verbal process is directed, he is the beneficiary of the verbal process. The 'verbiage is a nominal statement of verbal process: a noun expressing some kind of verbal behaviour. This is exemplified below:

Text 4   Sheik Abubakar Gumi said that soldiers involved in criminalities are not Muslim but Christian.

Text 9 Those insurgents in the south east are claiming they want their own country. No, we will not allow them

Text 20   Akinloye advises UN Secretary General to visit Middle Belt and southern   Nigeria to   see atrocities of Fulani herdsmen Buhari is covering up.

Sheik Abubakar Gumi	said	Soldiers	Involved	Criminalities are not Muslim
Sayer	Pr: verbal	Receiver	Pr: verbal	Verbiage

Those insurgents in the south east	are claiming	They	Want	their own country
Sayer	Pr: verbal	Receiver	Pr: verbal	Verbiage

Akinloye	Advises	UN Secretary General	to visit	Middle belt	And	Southern Nigeruia
Sayer	Pr: verbal	Receiver	Pr: verbal	verbiage	Conj	Verbiage

The verbal processes in the table above draw attention to the categorization between the sayer and the receiver and the relationship between the participants (sayer and receiver), hence, inform the verbiage. The sayer in (text 9) draw categorization between 'Them' "those insurgents in the south east" and 'Us' who are peaceful in some way as well as possessing hegemonic power over the other groups in the country. The idea of hegemonic power of one group over another is recoverable in the succeeding clause "No, we will not allow them". Text 9 emphasizes social distance and ethnic disharmony using the demonstrative adjective 'those' to signal ethnophaulic differences. Texts 19 and 9 also project the ideologies of the speakers as members of groups; therefore, express their perceptions of security situation in Nigeria. These ideological dichotomies, infer that both the 'sayer' and the 'target' belong to different groups and find it convenient to defend their groups' interests based on the mental models and socially shared representation they have formed about the security situation in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study examined Lexical choices and ideology in Nigeria's security and development discourse as constructed in Nigeria's media. It adopted the theoretical insights offered by Van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive theory and Halliday's (1978, 1985) systemic functional linguistics (SFL) system of transitivity to identify how Nigerians construct identities and socially represent the polarization among various groups in the country as 'Us' and 'Them' in the issues of security and national development. The findings revealed that the use of linguistic devices of thematization, lexicalization and process types to foreground ideologies. It is revealed too that discourses contain ideological based opinions and argumentation which are often implied or have underlying representation of social realities. It is also revealed that lexical choices in the select news excerpts were used to show positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation in giving biased reports in favour of the speaker's or writer's interest and blame negative situations on the other. The study generally note that information that portrays the 'Us' group negatively or the 'Them' group positively remain implicit, vague or de-emphasized whereas information that portrays the 'Us' group positively and 'Them' group negatively tends to be made explicit, topicalized or emphasized in media discourse. The study concluded that proper language use and ideological re-orientation are key concepts in discourses needed in multi-cultural and ethno-religious nation such as Nigeria to mitigate violence and promote peace and security.

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