

APPRAISAL OF PRESIDENT MUHAMADU BUHARI'S DISCOURSE ON NATIONAL HEALTHCARE REVITALISATION

Bashiru Samaila

Department of English Language
Zamfara State University, Talata Mafara, Zamfara State

Abstract

Languages across the globe are characterised with strategies that help their users to bend human thoughts for achievement of conversational goals in different discourse situations. Most times speakers, especially political office holders, capitalise on the contexts of discourse to manipulate their listeners, using a series of the strategies that are embedded in the language of discourse. In the case of President Buhari, the political figure usually has his speeches written before they are delivered to his audiences on different occasions. It is therefore expected that some discursive strategies would have been woven into the speeches. Such strategies need to be explored for the purpose of identifying the contextual, syntactic, cohesive markers and organisational patterns that characterise the President's speeches. On that basis, this paper carries out appraisal of the President Muhamadu Buhari's discourse on his commitment to national healthcare revitalisation in order to establish how his speeches serve as an ideological changer through political pronouns, intertextuality and hegemony while foregrounding his priority to the healthcare of Nigerians in the minds of his listeners. The paper finds that the President influences the thoughts of his listeners into recognising his commitment to their welfare and sincerity to his responsibility through his choice of political pronouns. It also establishes that the political figure exploits reference, repetition, connectivity, negation and anaphora through intertextuality to sustain the goal of his discourse. It as well reveals that he perpetuates hegemonic tendencies by accentuating the importance of his physical presence at the context of the discourse. The paper concludes that President Buhari's choice of discursive strategies further sustains unequal power relation between him and his audience, and promotes wider acceptance of his personality among the audience.

Keywords: Discourse, Discursive Strategy, Language of Ideology, and Language of Healthcare

Introduction

Beyond every reasonable doubt, speech writing and delivery are part of human system. Aside from that, speeches being put together as discourse ahead of public delivery, are usually characterised by different linguistic elements like ambiguity, figurative expression, code-switching/mixing and so on, which are to help the speakers achieve their goals. Incidentally, political leaders across the globe benefit extensively from the use of language in this regard. In the case of President Buhari, the political figure usually has his speeches written before they are delivered to his audiences on different occasions. It is therefore expected that some discursive strategies would have been woven into the speeches. Such strategies need to be explored for the purpose of

identifying the contextual, syntactic, cohesive markers and organisational patterns that characterise the President's speeches. On that basis, this paper carries out appraisal of the President Muhamadu Buhari's discourse on his commitment to national healthcare revitalisation in order to establish how his speeches serve as an ideological changer through political pronouns, intertextuality, and hegemony while foregrounding his priority to the healthcare of Nigerians in the minds of his listeners. It is therefore in the interest of the paper to:

- i. identify the structural features of President Buhari's discourse on national healthcare revitalisation.
- ii. explain the types of discursive strategies the president adopts to foreground his

- commitment to the healthcare of Nigerians.
- iii. evaluate how the discursive strategies President Muhammadu Buhari adopts enhance the conviction that he prioritises the healthcare of Nigerians.

In a related study, Nnamdi-Eruchalu (2017) through *A Critical Discourse Analysis of Muhammadu Buhari's Inaugural Speeches with a Focus on Pronouns* provides an insight into the influences of ideological stances from which he spoke on his choice of language, using critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework. The study reveals that by strategically selecting personal pronouns, Buhari constructed the identities that reflected the military and civilian backgrounds from which he spoke, as well as created the in-groups and out-groups he desired to project the authoritarianism and persuasion of military and democratic regimes respectively. Isah and Abaya (2019), too, in *A Critical Discourse Analysis of Rhetorical Devices in the Campaign Speeches of Presidential Candidate Muhammadu Buhari and President Goodluck Jonathan in the 2011 Elections in Nigeria* aim at revealing the meaning and ideological concepts to have persuasive effect on the electorate to control and garner support behind a political campaign speech, using speeches purposively selected and obtained from National Television Authority (NTA). The result shows that both speakers used rhetorical devices to persuade and appeal to audience to attain political power. Aboh and Agbede (2020) also in *between Statements and Actions: A Speech Act Analysis of President Buhari's Media Political Discourse* analyse the locutionary acts, illocutionary acts and the perlocutionary effects of Buhari's statements on "jailing of more thief," "rule of law should be subjected to national interest" and "being fair in federal appointments," using Austin's speech acts theory. The study finds that the locutionary and illocutionary acts of Buhari's statements. It also reveals how Buhari's statements abided by or flouted felicity conditions. However, this work builds on the existing studies on Muhammadu Buhari's discourses by carrying out appraisal of the political figure's use of political pronouns, intertextuality and hegemony on national healthcare revitalisation to evaluate his

mode of discourse as an ideological changer.

Language Use and Variation

As corroborated in the work of Parikh (2001), human beings typically use language to communicate information. He states that "two dimensions of communication and aboutness correspond to two constraints, communicative and informational." Uchendu (2017:111). The author therefore upholds the view that "Variability is inherent in human language" and most of the "variation is highly systematic," depending on "the speaker's purpose of communication, the relationship between speaker and hearer, the production circumstances and various demographic affiliations that a speaker can have." This is in relation to the observation of Widdowson (1996:110) in Drid (2010:24) that understanding the language of discourse involves understanding the world in which "language resides" and the need "to go outside of linguistics." Thus, any variation in the use of language is usually characterised with the interaction of context and text of the language used, as demonstrated in the choices the President makes in his address on the necessity to revitalise the health status of Nigerians.

Language of Politics/Ideology

Language as a phenomenon is defined by Sapir (1921) and cited by Oyeleye (2004) as "a pure human and non- instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols." In the view of Bloch and Trager (1942: 5), it is seen as "a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates." Based on the fact that language is human and serves as instrument of interaction, Abaya (2008:38) concludes that politicians (including President Buhari) "use language to achieve their aim of winning political support of the people." In addition, they "have a particular way of perceiving the world or a particular ideology. Because they have different ideologies, they approach political issues from different ideologies" (ibid.).

Hence, it is very difficult to separate language from politics. This is the reason Rozina and Karapetjana (2009) are of the view that "politicians are and have to be concerned about

using the language in order to communicate with the prospective audience: they make speeches, address electorate. . .” They explain further that “regimes being either democratic or totalitarian have to communicate in order to inform, persuade, advertise, issue their rules and regulations, legislate and alike.” In the process of explaining language and politics, Chilton (1998) describes language as “the universal capacity of humans in all societies to communicate” and politics as “the art of governance.” Rozina and Karapetjana (2009) extend these definitions when they view language “as an instrument to interact or transact in various situations and/or in different organizations being conventionally recognized as political environment.” Thus, it can be said that language is “lifeblood of politics” (Yunana 2012).

Luke (1998) explains that ideology “refers to the systems of ideas, beliefs, and practices and representations, which operate in the interests of an identifiable social class or group.” The concept of language ideology as quoted in the work of Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) is therefore explained from different perspectives. Each of the definitions is given as: “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalisation or justification of perceived language structure of use.” It is also seen self-evident ideas and objectives a group hold concerning roles of language in the social experience of members as they contribute to the expression of the group”. They also quote that language ideology is “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships together with their loading of morals and political interests” and “shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world.” By and large, language contributes immensely in “creating consent and making certain ideologies generally accepted as common sense” (Cameron, 1999:154 in Yunana 2012). In short, according to Cameron (1999) in Yunana (2012), “whoever controls words controls the worlds.” It is therefore not an understatement that President, using discourse, exercises control over those he addresses, particularly that the theme of the selected discourse affects the audience from top to bottom, being a health-related matter.

Language and Healthcare

Like many other human-related

phenomena, healthcare, as substantiated in language use, is very difficult to describe. Along that line, Jones (2015) states that there have been challenges analysing discourses that fall within the context of health communication. One of the challenges is the pervasiveness of health risk. It is connected to fact that people usually talk about health in many varied and indirect ways. Sometimes, the talk about health is used to accomplish actions that are not related to health. The discourse also draws from a wide range of opinions – from medical experts to individuals outside the profession. In addition, the challenge is evident in the sense that texts and interactions on health, to some extent, are part of complex negotiations of power between those who have access to different kinds of discursive resources – as in the case of President Buhari whose social roles require him to regularly deliver public presentations on socially related matters as he has done on national healthcare revitalisation – and those who should be assured of access to social needs.

Features of Healthcare Language

As established, healthcare relates with language in a unique manner. Dzuganova (2019) describes the uniqueness as features of medical language and medical texts. The features include:

- i. *Historical Development*: which makes it a form of discourse that relies heavily on Latin and Greek roots to create compound and derived words owing to the historical development of medical science.
- ii. *Morphological Arrangement*: which involves the use of prefixes and suffixes to obtain different meanings of a word.
- iii. *Semantic Interpretation*: which has to do with changes that occur in the meaning of a word as a result of the changes that occur in the form of the word, particularly owing to the internal or external arrangement of the various segments that make up the word.

By implication, the identified features bring about widening or narrowing of the meaning of words. They consequently build up the resource base from

which texts, like that of President Buhari on healthcare revitalisation, are prepared to contain discursive strategies necessary for meaning generation and conversational goal achievement on the threshold of social structure. Achieving this systematically falls within the mainstream of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which Moreno (2008) classifies into two main types. The first type deals with the ways in which unequal power is reproduced in conversation. It focuses on issues such as control over topics, interactions and turn-taking. The second deals with the content and not with the structure of the text. It concentrates on the ways in which ideologies are reproduced in discourse. Primarily, this study focuses more on the first type. This is because there are elements of power dominance in the speeches of the president as he holds most issues of discussion and treats them without interference of the audience. On that basis, the model of CDA is adopted as the theoretical framework for the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The analytical procedure adopted in this paper is Fairclough's (1989) *Discourse as a Social*

- i. Political Pronoun
- ii. Intertextuality
- iii. Hegemony

Excerpt 1

I am delighted to be here at this occasion to *personally flag off one of the cardinal programmes of our Administration – REVITALISATION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES IN NIGERIA*

Category A (Political Pronoun)

I
our

Category B (Intertextuality)

one of the cardinal programmes of our
Administration

Category C (Hegemony)

I... personally flag off...

versus

REVITALISATION OF PRIMARY
HEALTH CENTRES IN NIGERIA

In **Excerpt 1**, the speaker creates an atmosphere of happiness and satisfaction. He also identifies with the people of Kuchigoro, a village in the Federal Capital territory, by being “delighted to be” there “personally” (as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria) to “flag off” a very cardinal programme of his Administration. The Excerpt therefore foregrounds the essence of the President’s presence in such a local area through the capitalization of the theme of the discourse – REVITALISATION OF PRIMARY

HEALTH CENTRES IN NIGERIA. The speaker consequently benefits from the three devices of political pronouns (**I** and **our**), intertextuality (one of the cardinal programmes of the administration and the theme of the discourse– REVITALISATION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES IN NIGERIA) and hegemony (of expressing the favour of his physical presence to the audience) to enforce on the listeners an expected thought of his commitment to their healthcare.

Excerpt 2

*My presence here today demonstrates our Administration’s commitment to put health of Nigerians as a top priority. **Our goal of revitalizing the Primary Health Care Centres is to ensure that quality basic health care services are delivered to majority of Nigerians irrespective of their location in the country.***

Category A (Political

Pronoun)

My
 Our (x2)

Category B (Intertextuality)

Our goal of revitalizing the Primary Health Care Centres .

..
versus

... to ensure that quality basic health care services are delivered to majority of Nigerians irrespective of their location in the country

Category C (Hegemony)

My presence here today demonstrates .

While introducing **Excerpt 2**, the president uses hegemony to foreground the stance from which he wants the audience to view his administration. Hence, “my presence here today” provokes the thought that it is a **rare privilege** on the part of the people of Kuchigoro to have seen him in their midst. The Excerpt therefore serves as an awareness creation method, which the speaker adopts to promote his **commitment** to achieving revitalization of primary health care for the people, “irrespective of their location in the country.” For that purpose, he exploits political pronouns (My and our), intertextuality (revealing that the **goal of revitalising the Primary Health Care Centres is to ensure . . . quality basic health services are delivered to . . . Nigerians**).

Excerpt 3

We shall focus more on the people living in the rural areas and the vulnerable population in our society such as women, children under 5 years of age and the elderly in collaboration with national and international partners.

Category A (Political Pronoun)

We

Category B (Intertextuality)

people living in the rural areas and the vulnerable population in our society . .

..
versus

... such as women, children under 5 years of age and the elderly

Category C (Hegemony)

We shall focus more on the people living in the rural areas and the vulnerable population. . .

Through **Excerpt 3**, President *ing the health condition of the indigent in the society, promising that “We shall focus more” on those in the category of “women, children under 5 years of age and elderly.” To establish that, he uses discursive devices of political pronoun (We),*

intertextuality (by describing **women, children under 5 years of age and the elderly as the vulnerable population**) and hegemony (positioning himself and members of his cabinet as responsible individuals who “shall focus more.”

Excerpt 4

Let me state clearly, that this revitalization programme is in alignment with the agenda of our party, the All Progressive Congress (APC). We did promise to provide succor to the poor while at the same time providing for all other segments of the society. I am aware that out of pocket payment for health constitute over 70% of total health expenditure. This is more than the globally recommended 30-40%.

Category A (Political Pronoun)

me
 We
 I

Category B (Intertextuality)

. . .this revitalization programme
versus
 (The main theme of the Discourse)

 our party . . .
versus
 the All Progressive Congress (APC)

 over 70% of total health expenditure
versus
 This . . .

Category C (Hegemony)

Let me state clearly . . .

The President makes bold to defend the truth of his commitment to the revitalisation of the healthcare of Nigerians. This is made bare in his choice of political pronouns “me,” “We” and “I”; the use of intertextuality – which includes a connection of the theme of the discourse (**revitalisation programme**) and the agenda of the President’s party, presentation of “our party” as “the All Progressive Congress” and the use of “This” to corroborate the party’s achievement of “over 70% of total health expenditure” – and hegemony through which he subtly demonstrates a control over the audience, the events and context of interaction when he states, “Let me state clearly.”

Excerpt 5

However, only less than 5% of the total population is covered by any kind of health insurance or risk protection mechanism which is against the recommended 90% coverage by the World Health Organisation. *Our vision is to reverse this unsatisfactory situation and better care for the poor and needy.*

Category A (Political Pronoun)

Our

Category B (Intertextuality)

However. . .
versus
 (The point in **Excerpt4**)
 . . . only less than 5% of the total population is covered . . .
versus
 . . . this unsatisfactory situation

Category C (Hegemony)

Our vision to reverse this unsatisfactory . . .

Although the President acknowledges the fact that the available healthcare services in the country at the

time of the delivery of the text do not favour most Nigerians, since “only less than 5% of the total population is covered by any kind of health insurance or risk protection mechanism which is against the recommended 90% coverage by the World Health Organisation,” he disassociates himself and his party from that reality by reechoing his commitment to reversing “this unsatisfactory situation and better care for the poor and needy.” To achieve that, he exploits **political pronoun** (**our** – to underline the supports of his party), **intertextuality** (to exonerate himself from the states’ failure in the health sector by placing his commitment to Nigerians’ healthcare above the country’s previous “unsatisfactory” performance rating by the World Health Organisation) and **hegemony** (by which he proclaims the capacity of his government to reverse “this unsatisfactory situation” of the country’s very low performance in healthcare delivery).

Excerpt 6

Our Administration in recognition of this promised to revitalize one Primary Health Care Centre in each of the political wards in the country. So far, **we have commenced the revitalization of one Primary Health Care in each senatorial zone** in the country. **Our vision** is to revitalise 10,000 Primary Health Care Facilities in Nigeria using a phased approach. **The first phase of this approach is what we are flagging off today.** It will signal the revitalization of the first 109 Primary Health Care facilities across the 36 states and the FCT.

Category A (Political Pronoun)

we (x3)
 Our

Category B (Intertextuality)

... in recognition of this. . .
versus
 (The challenge in **Excerpt 5**)
 . . . we have commenced the revitalization of one Primary Health Care in each senatorial zone . . .
versus
 . . . to revitalize one Primary Health Care Centre in each of the political wards . . .
 The first phase of this approach (*versus* **the commencement of the revitalisation**)
Versus
 . . . what we are flagging off today/It. . .

Category C (Hegemony)

Our Administration . . .
 Our vision . . .

After establishing that Nigeria has failed to provide the recommended 90% coverage of health insurance or risk protection mechanism by the World Health Organisation, President Buhari raises hope in his audience by committing himself to revising the situation through revitalisation of “one primary health care centre in each of the political wards across the country,” “10,000 Primary Health Care Facilities in Nigeria using a phased approach” and “first 109 Primary Health Care facilities across the 36 states and the FCT.” The commitment is established in the choice of the three discursive devices of **political pronouns** (**we** and **our** – to create the feeling that the fulfilment of his promises is dependent upon the cooperation of the various players in his administration), **intertextuality** (in which he juxtaposes the failure of the previous

administration and the commitment of his administration; his commitment to the healthcare revitaliation and the pronouncement of building of the various health facilities across the country; and the reality of his sincerity and the “flagging off of today” which “(It) will signal the revitalization”) and **hegemony** (by which he attributes the capacity to actualise his promises on the revitalisation of the healthcare of Nigerians to no other source but “**Our Administration/Our vision.**”

Excerpt 7

Kuchigoro Primary Health Care Centre has been renovated as a model primary health care centre where quality health care services will be obtained at little or no cost to the beneficiaries. This is through the collaboration of Government (Federal Ministry of Health, National Primary Health Care Development Agency, Federal Capital Development Administration and the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital) and Partners such as General Electric and Sterling Bank.

Category A (Political Pronoun)

?

Category B (Intertextuality)

Kuchigoro Primary Health Care Centre. . .

versus

a model primary health care centre/where quality health care services will be obtained at little or no cost to the beneficiaries/This

.....

. . . Partners. . .

versus

. . . such as General Electric and Sterling Bank

Category C (Hegemony)

?

To further confirm his commitment to the revitalisation of Nigerians healthcare, the President publicly announces the complete renovation of “Kuchigoro Primary Health Care Centre” and presents the facility as “a model primary health care centre” for quality health care services . . . at little or no cost to the beneficiaries,” suggesting that the achievement is a product of the ability to put together resources from both government and the private sector. The major discursive strategy that plays out in **Excerpt 7** is **intertextuality** through which *Kuchigoro Primary Health Care Centre*, being referred to as “This,” is presented as “a model primary health care centre/ where quality health care services will be obtained at little or no cost to the beneficiaries” while those who are *Partners* with the President to achieve the Kuchigoro Project are exemplified “as General Electric and Sterling Bank.”

Excerpt 8

I want to assure Nigerians that Government will continue to ensure that great numbers of Nigerians have access to quality basic health care services. Accordingly, the provision in the National Health Act, 2014 for the Basic Health Care Provision Fund is in the process of being implemented. I also assure my fellow countrymen and women that our Administration will fulfill all the promises made to the people.

Category A (Political Pronoun)

I (x2)

Category B (Intertextuality)

Accordingly . . ./I also assure my fellow countrymen

Category C (Hegemony)

I want to assure Nigerians that Government will continue

Building on the achievement completing the renovation of “Kuchigoro Primary Health Care Centre” encourages his audience in **Excerpt 8** to believe in his commitment to their healthcare by assuring them “that *Government will continueto ensure that great numbers of Nigerians have access to quality basic health care services*” through the enactment of the “National Health Act, [2014](#)” and the reassurance that “*our Administration will fulfill all the promises*” The three discursive devices of political pronoun, intertextuality and hegemony are therefore exploited to foreground the assurance tendencies in the order of (i) repetition of “I” for personalisation of the commitment (ii) reemphasising the assurance by the use of the connectives **Accordingly** and **also** as well as the repetition of “**assure**” to “**Nigerians,**” otherwise referred to as “**my fellow countrymen**” (iii) emphasis in the use of “**will**” to establish his capacity to put to effect what he has uttered, which include “*continueto ensure that great numbers of Nigerians have access to quality basic health care services*” and “*fulfill all the promises made to the people.*”

Excerpt 9

The provision of quality health care service will reverse the poor health indices in the country. I am hopeful that our women will no more be dying needlessly during childbirth; our children will no more be dying needlessly as a result of vaccine preventable diseases or common ailment; access to health care will not be limited because of lack of money to pay.

Category A (Political Pronoun)

I
 Our (x2)

Category B (Intertextuality)

The provision of quality health care service. . .
versus
 . . . the provision in the National Health Act, [2014](#) for the Basic Health Care Provision Fund(**Excerpt 8**)

. . . that our women . . ./our children . . ./access to health care. . .

versus

I am hopeful . . .

Category C (Hegemony)

. . . our women will no more be dying needlessly during childbirth

. . .

. . . our children will no more be dying needlessly . . .

. . . access to health care will not be limited . . .

Through **Excerpt 9**, the political figure of the healthcare of Nigerians – reversal of “the poor health indices in the country” maternal/child mortality rates and access to healthcare services for all and sundry. To make his opinion on

the benefits of his commitment to Nigerians’ access to healthcare real to his audience, President Buhari chooses **political pronoun “I”** and **“our”** (in which the former is meant to personalise the promises made and the latter to identify with the most vulnerable in the Nigerian society), **intertextuality** (to reveal the content of the National Health Act, 2014, which is provision of quality healthcare; and to confirm the individuals with whom he has a plan of healthcare delivery for by connecting the hope and its recipients – “our women” and “our children”) and **hegemony** (through which underlines the extent of his commitment to the theme of the discourse – “women **will no more** be dying . . . children **will no more** be dying (and) access to health care **will not** be limited).

Excerpt 10

I want to commend the Honourable Minister of Health and his team for ensuring the flag off of this programme and to call on all our state governors to see this as a call to action to make revitalization of Primary Health Care Centres a vital part of their agenda. Our Government has also through the Saving One Million Lives Initiative, provided 1.5 Million USD to each state government and FCT to ensure quality health care to women and children.

Category A (Political Pronoun)

I
his
our(x2)

Category B (Intertextuality)

I want to commend . . . and to call on. . .
Our Government also . . .

Category C (Hegemony)

Our Government has also through the Saving One Million Lives Initiative, provided 1.5 Million USD to each state government and FCT to ensure quality health care to women and children.

The President, on one hand, exhibits the attitude of gratitude in **Excerpt 10** and a call for cooperation on the order. Therefore, by commending the Honourable Minister of health and members of his team, the President is challenging them to sustain their loyalty to his government. Since the states governors are crucial to the implementation of his agenda on healthcare revitalisation, the President also challenge the governors to share his vision of “a call to action,” reminding them of his initial supports to the governors in the form of providing “1.5 Million USD to each state government and FCT to ensure quality health care to women and children.” By implication, the governors will be responsible if the healthcare revitalisation initiative does not materialise. Through **political pronoun “I,”** the speaker personalise the acknowledgment of the Minister of Health’s effort as well as the latter’s capacity to personal the responsibility of leading a team for success by using the pronoun **“his”** to modify the **team** that executed the healthcare revitalisation project. The present creates two senses for the choice of **“our”** to identify with the states governors who, by that singular act, should identify with him in realising his vision on healthcare delivery and to justify his request from the governors by establishing that he and members of his cabinet have collectively provided the

governors what they need to do so. Therefore, the governors have no reason to fail him in that regard. Using the element of intertextuality, the President inputs cohesiveness in the Excerpt, using “**and**” and “**also**” while achieving hegemony through the confirmation of providing the state government and FCT a sum 1.5 Million USD to make them do his bidding.

Excerpt 11

I want to thank our development partners especially, the United States Government, the World Bank, the European Union and Department For International Development for supporting the health sector in providing quality health service to our people.

Category A (Political Pronoun)

I
 Our(x2)

Category B (Intertextuality)

our development partners . . .
versus
 . . . the United States Government, the World Bank, the European Union and Department For International Development . . .
 . . . want to thank . . .
versus
 i. for supporting the health sector
 ii. in providing quality health service to our people

Category C (Hegemony)

I want to thank . . .

Having realising the effectiveness of gratitude in text delivery, President Buhari systematically seeks more supports from the various players in the achievement of the Kuchigoro healthcare revitalisation project by giving them special recognitions. These are organisations whose funding has not to do with Nigerian government. Hence, honouring them will encourage future aids. To substantiate that, there is need to incorporate **political pronouns** (like “**I**” to ensure the best form of appreciation is given through the highest authority in the land; “**our**” which connotes the existence of mutual relationship between the speaker and the foreign partners, and the speakers identification with the most vulnerable individuals in Nigeria), **intertextuality** (by exemplifying the “development partners” as the United States Government, the World Bank, the European Union and Department For International Development and stating the reasons for thanking them as “supporting the health sector” (and) “providing quality health service to our people”) and **hegemony** (in which the speaker demonstrates the importance of having the appreciation to the foreign partners come from him personally).

Excerpt 12

I want to also thank our National Primary Health Care Development Agency, Sterling Bank and General Electric for the renovation and provision of the necessary equipment including an ambulance at Kuchigoro Primary Health Care Centre. We have set up an accountability mechanism to ensure that this Primary Health Care Facility remains functional.

Category A (Political Pronoun)

I
 our

Category B (Intertextuality)

. . . want to also thank. . .
versus

Category C (Hegemony)

. . . **We** have set up an accountability mechanism

In a further demonstration of the attitude of gratitude in text delivery, President Buhari also recognises the contribution of local partner to the realisation the Kuchigoro healthcare revitalisation project by giving them, too, special recognitions, since honouring them will as well encourage future dedication to the President’s initiatives. He therefore, demonstrate that through the choice of **political pronouns** (like “**I**” to ensure the best form of appreciation is given through the highest authority in the land; “**our**” to identify with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency as one of the agencies responsible for the execution of his administration’s policies; “**We**” which implies that he could not have achieved the currently celebrated success without being surrounded by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, Sterling Bank and General Electric), **intertextuality** (through repetition of “want to also thank” which originates from the recipients’ “renovation and provision of the necessary equipment/. . . an ambulance” toward achieving the revitalisation of the Kuchigoro healthcare project) and **hegemony** (which foregrounds the exercise of executive power through setting up of “an accountability mechanism” and ensuring “that this Primary Health Care Facility remains functional”).

Excerpt 13

I want to use this opportunity to call on all stakeholders to ensure that this facility continues to work optimally by using it and ensuring that the health professionals are delivering quality services. Health Workers should also play **their** parts in ensuring the sustainability of this model Primary Health Care. I will also want to personally charge health workers to rededicate **themselves** to their duties. **Our** Administration will continue to promote the welfare of all in the Health Sector.

CC BY-NC-N

62

Category A (Political Pronoun)

I (x2)
their (x2)

Category B (Intertextuality)

. . . want to . . .
versus

Category C (Hegemony)

i. . . ensure that this facility
continues to work optimally by

In **Excerpt 13**, the President stresses that the responsibility of a sustainable healthcare delivery rests on both the government and the citizenry. Upon that, he identifies the stakeholders in national healthcare sustenance and challenges them to work toward ensuring good management of the installed healthcare facilities through unwavering dedication. He further commits himself, through his administration, to promoting “*the welfare of all in the Health Sector.*” To accentuate those positions, the President chooses **political pronouns** (like “**I**” to express his expectations from those who will handle the provided health facilities; “**their**”/”**themselves**” to suggest that the president has played his role of providing the need facility for Nigerians; and “**our**” which implies that the continuation of the promotion of the welfare of all in the health sector is a shared responsibility among the President and all the individuals who are directly or indirectly part of his government, including the health officials themselves), **intertextuality** (through the repetition of “want to” and the connective “also” as well as the relationship between “all stakeholders” and “health workers”) and **hegemony** (through which the President issues directives to health professionals of quality service, health workers for the sustainability of the model primary health care in Kuchigoro and their rededication, reassuring them of continual promotion of all in health sector).

Excerpt 14

Now, I hereby formally flag off the Primary Health Care Revitalization Programme and commission the renovated Kuchigoro Primary Health Care Centre.

— **Category A (Political Pronoun)**

I

Category B (Intertextuality)

Now . . .
versus

Previously mentioned points in **Excerpt 1** to
Excerpt 13

Category C (Hegemony)

. . . hereby formally flag off
. . . and commission . . .

By uttering **Excerpt 14**, the President performs the act of flagging off of the primary health revitalisation programme and the renovation of Kuchigoro primary healthcare centre. The choice of the three discursive elements of political pronoun, textuality and hegemony vividly portray the goal of the text. Hence, the pronoun “**I**” suggests the speaker’s personalising initiation of the idea and the demonstration of the promises attached to the idea. **Intertextuality** is adopted at this point to conclude the text, connecting the realisation of goal the points raised in **Excerpt 1** to **Excerpt 13** through the choice of “**Now**” while **hegemony** is played through the political figure’s emphasising his acts of flagging off and commissioning of health revitalisation programme in words and deed.

Findings

This study has focused on appraisal of President Muhamadu Buhari’s discourse on his commitment to national healthcare revitalisation in order to establish how his speeches serve as an ideological changer through political pronouns, intertextuality, and hegemony while foregrounding his priority to the healthcare of Nigerians in the minds of his listeners. Through the process, the study finds that:

- i. President Muhammadu Buhari captures the minds of his audience into believing that he is committed to providing them the kind of healthcare service they deserve, using
 - “**I**”/“**my**”/“**me**” – through which the President promotes commitment on a personal level, show of authority, establishment of involvement and highlights of his good qualities and achievement, particularly to foreground his prioritising the provision of a world-class healthcare for all Nigerians.
 - “**their**”/“**themselves**”/“**his**” – to divide people in groups for the purpose of creating an image of “others” as against himself/his group as in **Excerpts 10 and 13**, “. . . **his** team for ensuring the flag off of this programme . . .” and *play their parts in ensuring the sustainability of this model Primary Health Care . . . rededicate themselves to their duties*” respectively for accentuation of the fact that the concerned are responsible if the healthcare delivery agenda fails
 - “**We**”/“**our**” – by which the President on the one hand shares the responsibility of healthcare delivery and maintenance by creating involvement of individuals like party members, cabinet members, governors, etc., and gives a sense of collective responsibility when controversial decisions concerning the possibility of fulfilling his promises on healthcare revitalisation and project delivery/maintenance are required on the other.
- ii. to foreground the goal of revitalising the Primary Health Care Centres in his discourse, the President employs the structural features of:
 - *reference*: in **Excerpt 4**, “**We** did promise to provide succor to the poor,” as a reference to his campaign promises before the 2015 general elections; **Excerpt 5/Excerpt 6/ Excerpt 9**, “only less than 5% of the total population is covered”/“**Our Administration** in recognition of this promised to revitalize one Primary Health Care Centre in each of the political wards” by any kind of health insurance”/“The provision of quality health care service will reverse the poor health indices in the country,” which the President utters to promote his vision of healthcare revitalisation to Nigerians over the cited low performance of the previous government in the area of health insurance;
 - *repetition*: For reassurance of his commitment to the listeners’ healthcare, the President expressly emphasises on “*Primary Health Care*” for the purpose of its revitalisation in **Excerpts 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 12 and 14**.
 - *connectivity*: through which the various Excerpts that make the subject matter of the discourse on healthcare revitalisation are joined to form a cohesive whole as demonstrated in the use of “However” and “also” in **Excerpts 5, 8, 12 & 13**.
 - *negation*: **Excerpt 5**, “However, only less than 5% of the total population is covered . . . **Our vision is to reverse this unsatisfactory situation** and better care for the poor and needy” by which

President Buhari condemns the situation of healthcare delivery before he came to office, terming the situation “unsatisfactory” and capitalizing on that to promote his “vision . . . to reverse” it.

- *anaphora*: “**our** women will no more be dying needlessly during childbirth; **our** children will no more be dying needlessly . . .” **Excerpt 9**, for the purpose emphasis.
- iii. the President presents himself as an authority capable of turning around the health status of all Nigerians, regardless of their status or location, by accentuating the importance of his physical presence at the scene of the healthcare revitalisation programme (**Excerpts 1 & 2**), confirming the true existence of some “vulnerable population” among his audience (**Excerpt 3**), unequivocally expressing personal thoughts as in “Let me state clearly” (**Excerpt 4**), reversing the “unsatisfactory,” etc.

Conclusion

This paper has carried out appraisal of the President Muhamadu Buhari’s discourse on his commitment to national healthcare revitalisation to investigate the possibility of using discursive strategies like political pronoun, intertextuality and hegemony as an ideological changer in his speech delivery. The paper finds that the President influences the thoughts of his listeners into recognising his commitment to their welfare and sincerity to his responsibility through his choice of political pronouns. It also establishes that the political figure exploits reference, repetition, connectivity, negation and anaphora through intertextuality to sustain the goal of his discourse. It as well reveals that he perpetuates hegemonic tendencies by accentuating the importance of his physical presence at the context of the discourse. The study concludes that President Buhari’s choice of discursive strategies further sustains unequal power relation between him and his audience, and promotes wider acceptance of his personality among the audience.

References

- Abaya, S. A. (2008) *A Pragmatic Analysis of Nigerian Military Coup Announcement*. PhD Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Aboh, S. C. and Agbedo, C. U. (2020) Between Statements and Actions: A Speech Act Analysis of President Buhari’s Media Political Discourses. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. Vol. 11, No. 6, pp 948 – 955.
- Bloch, B. & Trager, G. L. (1942) *Outline of Linguistic Analysis*. Special Publications of the Linguistic Society of America. Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America.
- Chilton, P. A. (1998) “Politics and Language”. In *Concise Encyclopaedia of Pragmatics*. London: Elsevier, 688-694.
- Drid, T. (2010) Discourse Analysis: Key Concepts and Perspectives. *Alathar Journal*. Vol. 09. Pp 20 – 25.
- Dzukanova, B. (2019) Medical Language – A Unique Linguistic Phenomenon. *J.A.H.R.* Vol. 10/1, No. 19, Pp 199 – 145.
- Fairclough, N. (1989) *Language and Power*. Harlow: Longman.
- Isah, S. S. & Abaya, S. A. (2019) A Critical Discourse Analysis of Rhetorical Devices in the Campaign Speeches of Presidential Candidate Muhamadu Buhari and President Goodluck Jonathan in the 2011 Elections in Nigeria. *Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies*. 8, 132 – 146.
- Jones, R. (2015) Discourse and Health Communication. In H. Hamilton, D. Tannen and D. Schiffrin (Eds) *Handbook of Discourse Analysis (3rd Ed.)* London: Wiley.
- Luke, A. (1998) *Ideology*. In *Concise Encyclopaedia of Pragmatics*. London: Elsevier/ Pp366.
- Nnamdi-Eruchalu, G. I. (2017) A Critical Discourse Analysis of Muhammadu Buhari Inaugural Speeches with a Focus on Promnouns. *International Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics*. Vol. 4(2), pp 156 – 164.
- Obeng, S. G. (1997) “Languages and Polities: Indirectness in Political Discourse”. *Discourse and Society*. 8(1), 49 – 83.
- _____ and Harford, B. (2002) *Surviving through Obliqueness: Political Discourse in Emerging Democracies*. New York: Nova Science Publisher.

- Oyeleye, A. (2004) *Language and Discourse in Society*. Ibadan: Hope Communication.
- Parikh, P. (2001) *The Use of Language*. US: CSLI Publications.
- Rahimi, A. and Sahragard, R. (2006) "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Euphemization and Derogation in e-mail on the late Pope". *The Linguistic Journal*, Vol II.
- Rozina, G. and Karapetjana, I. (2009) *The Use of Language in Political Rhetoric: Linguistic Manipulation*. SDU Fen Edebiyat Fakultesi/Sostal Bilimber Dergisi: Mayıs.
- Sapir, E. (1921) *An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Thorn, S. (1997) *Mastering Advanced English Language*. Chicago: Palmgrove.
- Uchendu, A. G. (2017). Language Variation and Change in Inyi Speech Community: A Sociolinguistic Study. *International Journal of Social and Management Sciences, Madonna University(IJSMS)*. Pp 110 – 117.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1998) *Critical Discourse Analysis*. <http://www.hum.uva.nl/teun/cda.htm>.
- Woolard, K. A. and Schieffelin, B. B. (1994) "Language Ideology" in *Annual Rev. Anthropol.*: Annual Reviews Inc., 23:55 – 82.
- Yunana, A. (2012) *A Critical Discourse Analysis of Presidents Goodluck Jonathan and Barrack Obama*. M.A. Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.