A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Language of Dominance in Selected Police Interrogation of Suspects in Kaduna Metropolis

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Abstract
Police interrogation is one of the primary methods used by the police to obtain information from witnesses, victims and suspects of crime and it plays a significant role in the majority of police investigations. This paper investigates how the police employ language to reproduce, negotiate and maintain power, dominance and asymmetry during the interrogation of suspects in Gabasawa police station, Kaduna Police Command. The researchers adopt Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional model (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; and 2003) which is a model within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the analytical tool for the analysis of the data obtained during the interrogation of suspects. Data were obtained with an audio recorder during the interrogation sessions in the police station. The data obtained are criminal in nature and the choice of Gabasawa in Kaduna police command is based on the premise that the researcher is based in Kaduna town. The paper submits that the police employ strategic discursive devices such as formulation, interruption, topic control, tense, vocabulary choice, pronouns, modality and various strands of question and answer forms that are value-laden to reproduce, negotiate and maintain power, dominance and inequality during the interrogation of suspects.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Interrogation, Ideology, Discourse, Institution, Dominance, Power.

Introduction
This study investigates the language use of the police in the interrogation of suspects in Gabasawa which is under Kaduna Police Command with a view to exploring how the police discursively construct their position of dominance and asymmetry during the interrogation of suspects. Police interrogation is within the ambit of institutional discourse and its focus is on how the unequal distribution of power among participants, typical of such settings, is manifested. It is one of the primary methods used by the police to obtain information from witnesses, victims and suspects of crime and plays a significant role in the majority of police investigations.

This paper is hinged on Habermas (1977) view of language as a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimize relations of organized power. “Insofar as the legitimations of power relations ... are not articulated ... language is also ideological” (Habermas ibid). Hence, language is a tool that is used by ‘organized power’ such as powerful institutions like the police to control the social order especially relations of inequality. This study investigates the use of strategic discourse devices during the interrogation of suspects in Gabasawa police station, Kaduna Police Command. It adopts Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional model (Fairclough, 1989; 1992; and 2003) which is a model within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the analytical tool for the analysis of the data obtained during the interrogation of suspects.

The aim of this study is to examine the strategic discourse devices employed by the police in Gabasawa under Kaduna Police Command during the interrogation of suspects. The significance is that it reveals how the police institution sustains asymmetrical relations of power during the interrogation of suspects which is contrary to the much held belief that the police always apply coercion during interrogation to elicit information.

Review of Literature
The Language of Power and Dominance
Discourse has been seen as an important site for both constructing and maintaining power relations. CDA analysts tend to see power as already accruing to some participants and not to others and this power is determined by their institutional role and their socio-economic status, gender or ethnic identity (Fairclough, 1992; Van Dijk, 1993). In this regard, social relations of power pre-exist the talk itself. Therefore, in CDA, approaching the role of power in discourse tends to be a question of examining how those members of society, who possess it, reflect, reinforce and reproduce it through the language they use; in other words, their discourse practices. Fairclough conceptualizes power ‘both in terms of asymmetries between participants in discourse events, and in terms of unequal capacity and control how texts are produced, distributed and consumed... in particular socio-cultural contexts (1995: 1-2). Van Dijk who on the other hand views it from the perspective of access to discourse, interprets it (power) as discursive control (including) who has access to the various types of discourse, who can and cannot talk to whom, in which situations, and about what. The more powerful the people, the larger their verbal possibilities in discourse becomes (1996: 66).

Based on these definitions by these CDA analysts, it is safe to state that power involves control of one group over other group(s). Control may be in terms of action or cognition. Action involves the use of force while cognition involves the influence of the mind (Dijk, 1993). Cognitive control which is of concern to CDA is enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to change the mind of others in one’s own interests (Dijk, 1993: 254). This cognitive goes beyond a simple process of domination from above. Rather, it can be seen to be jointly produced by participants, since the powerless interactants are led to believe that dominance is legitimate in some way or other (Simpson and Mayr, 2009: 2).

Dominance in the words of Dijk (1993) is defined as:

the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality. This reproduction process may involve such different ‘modes’ of discourse – power relations as the more or less direct or overt support, enactment, representation, legitimation, denial, mitigation, or concealment of dominance, among others.

Put succinctly, dominance is the exercise of control by one group over others in its own interest which results in an unequal or asymmetric relation and discourse is the vehicle through which dominance among the interactants in an interactional or communicative event is reproduced.

**Language of the Police Interrogation**

Police interrogation is one of the primary methods used by police to obtain information from witnesses, victims and suspects of crime and plays a significant role in the majority of police investigations. A suspect according to Roberts (2012:2) is defined as an individual that a law enforcement officer reasonably believes has some involvement in an offence. The witness interrogation may give police new information about a crime such as a description of an offender, an account of events or useful background information. The suspect interrogation on the other hand, may allow the police to ascertain an individual’s level of involvement in an offence, implicate others or may help exonerate the suspect. It is therefore a formal questioning of the suspect by one or more police officers following the suspect’s arrest on suspicion of committing the offence. The witness interrogation may give police new information about a crime such as a description of an offender, an account of events or useful background information. The suspect interrogation on the other hand, may allow the police to ascertain an individual’s level of involvement in an offence, implicate others or may help exonerate the suspect. It is therefore a formal questioning of the suspect by one or more police officers following the suspect’s arrest on suspicion of committing the offence. A good police interrogation is conducted in the frame of the law, is governed by the interrogation goal, and is influenced by facilitating fact. The interrogation is however not without its risks; some interrogation practices can lead to investigators obtaining poor, misleading and unreliable information that can in extreme cases lead to a miscarriage of justice (Gudjonsson, 2003).

Jamaare (1999:8) sees interrogation as
the preliminary mechanism traditionally used by investigating officers to effect successful and scientific dispensation of criminal justice. Ehindero in Farinde and Adegbite (2015) views it as “a police tool of trade”. They state that by it, persons suspected of crime are given enough opportunity to tell their stories. According to them, God in the Garden of Eden, applied interrogation to obtain Adam’s confession in Genesis chapter 3:9 – 12:

But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it.”

The police interrogation is a unique type of institutional discourse, and it is important in the chain of evidence collection or prosecution and defense. As such, the mechanics of police interrogation should be well understood. The researchers are therefore, interested in strategic discourse devices, particularly; identifying the ways in which interrogators move the conversation in order to elicit relevant information of maximum use to the investigation, investigate the discursive patterns of interaction between the police interrogators and suspects, and examine how these strategic discourse devices do ideological work. As police interrogations are often submitted as evidence in trials, it is imperative that linguists contribute towards the understanding of the discourse and social elements at work in this setting.

Previous Works on Police Interrogation

Mayr (2000) carries out a linguistic analysis of a cognitive training programme for offenders at a prison in Scotland in 1996 so as to investigate the discourse practices used in these sessions. The researcher obtained data through video tape and written discourse of the Cognitive Skills Handbook used by the officers as reference-text for running the class. The study adopts Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Approach to CDA as its framework for studying language in relation to power and ideology. It submits that the discursive practices investigated are ideological in that they produce and reproduce unequal power relations in the way they represent and classify offenders. This present study is related to Mayr (2000) as both researchers apply Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Approach for data analysis. They are however divergent in that while Mayr (2000) obtained data through video tape and written discourse, the source of data for this research is obtained through audio recording of police interrogation of suspects. Also, unlike this study which is on language use of police interrogation of suspects, Mayr (2000) is on the linguistic analysis of a cognitive training programme for offenders at a prison.

MacLeod (2010) investigates the discursive patterns of interaction between the police interrogators and women reporting rape in the United Kingdom. Data were collected through video recording and analyzed using a multi-method approach comprising of tools from Micro-sociology, conversation Analysis (CA) and Discursive Psychology. The crust of the study is that the police who are the interviewers draw on particular interactional resources to shape interviewees accounts in particular ways. However, the difference between MacLeod’s work and this present study is that MacLeod investigated only women reporting rape while this study is on criminal investigation. Furthermore, the research employs Fairclough’s Three- Dimensional Approach in the analysis of the recorded data while MacLeod analyzed her data using Micro-Sociology, CA and Discursive Psychology.

Sadiq (2011) examines the language of police interrogation in Kano Metropolis. The study specifically focuses on the description of the structure and organization of the content of police/accused discourse and observes the Communication Strategies and motivation of the participants in negotiating the interaction. He used an audio recorder to record the data from
three police divisions namely: Fagge, Normansland, and Nassarawa. The data was analysed using the eclectic model incorporating Grice Cooperative Principles (1975), Sinclair and Coulthard’s Discourse Analytic framework (1975), and Bruton (1981). The findings of the study is that the question /answer sequence pattern is a valuable tool in Police criminal investigations. Sadiq’s research is similar to the present study based on the fact that it analyses the question/answer interactional control device which is part of the language of police interrogation but it is different in that the analysis in the present study is based on Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model. Also, while the present researchers obtained their data from only one police station, Sadiq (2011) obtained his data from three divisions within the same command.

Theoretical Framework

There are various models of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) for the study of texts, but this study adopts Norman Fairclough’s approach (1989; 1992; 1995; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) to CDA in the analysis of data obtained at two police commands. The researchers are of the view that this model (Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model) provides the framework for the analysis of data obtained from police interrogation of suspects at the aforementioned police commands. The researchers are of the view that this model (Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model) provides the framework for the analysis of data obtained from police interrogation of suspects at the aforementioned police commands. The researchers are of the view that this model (Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model) provides the framework for the analysis of data obtained from police interrogation of suspects at Gabasawa police station and how they achieve dominance and asymmetry.

Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model is of the view that every language use is a communicative event and consists of three dimensions:

1. it is a text (speech, writing, visual image or a combination of these);
2. it is a discursive practice which involves the production and consumption of texts; and
3. it is a social practice.

Discourse-as-text (description) includes choices and patterns in vocabulary (e.g. wording, metaphor), grammar (e.g. transitivity, modality), cohesion (e.g. conjunction, schemata), and text structure (e.g. episode marking, turn-taking system). The second dimension is discourse-as-discursive-practice (interpretation), i.e. discourse as something which is produced, circulated, distributed, and consumed in society. The third dimension is discourse-as-social-practice (explanation), i.e. the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is seen to operate.

The adoption of Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model (2008) requires the employment of discoursal strategies on various levels so as to achieve ideological aims. He states that:

On the macro level, these strategies relate to interactional features such as the generic structure of texts. On the micro level, strategies are concerned with discoursal features such as how arguments are presented, how different voices are combined and how various sections of the text are framed. At the micro level, the strategies include such things as pronoun usage, nominalization and passivisation, discourse markers and deixis.

Based on the above levels of discoursal strategies, this study investigates the employment of discoursal strategies which include but not limited to question and answer forms, formulation, interruption, topic control, pronoun, modality, declarative sentence, vocabulary choice and tense during the police interrogation of suspects at Gabasawa police station and how they achieve dominance and asymmetry.
Dimensional model is based on the notion that discourse is an important form of social practice which reproduces and changes social relations including power relations, and at the same time is also shaped by other social practices and structures. The researcher is of the view that this model provides the framework on which the analysis of selected police interrogation of suspects are carried out in order to investigate how the police (re)produce, negotiate and maintain power, dominance and asymmetry during the interrogation of suspects.

Methodology
This study is a qualitative research on the police interrogation of suspects which necessitated the application of Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional model in the analysis of data obtained. The data which were obtained from interrogations that are criminal by nature were audio recorded at Gabasawa police station in Kaduna police command. The collected data were in Hausa, Pidgin English, Igbo and English Languages. Since translation into another language can be quite subjective and expresses a translator’s personal understanding of the text, there is a danger of being imprecise in transmitting its meaning. The researchers hence purposively selected only two interrogations that were obtained in English Language and transcribed them into a written text.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion
The researchers analysed the data obtained systematically through the description of text, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context. The three dimensions are analyzed simultaneously as the analysis of texts “should not be artificially isolated from analysis of institutional and discoursal practices within which texts are embedded” (Fairclough, 1995:9). The major purpose of the analysis is to show how the police construct a position of dominance and asymmetry during the interrogation of suspects in Gabasawa police station. In the data presented, IPO stands for investigating police officer. The numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) refer to speaker turns. The texts has been divided into excerpts to facilitate analysis. Under the transcription, a spaced dot indicates a short pause, a dash a longer pause, extended square brackets overlap, and parentheses, talk which was not distinguishable enough to transcribe. The full transcription key appears in the Appendix.

Text Analysis
1. The interrogation of suspects who were alleged to have robbed unsuspecting motorists along Kaduna/Zaria Expressway.

Description

i. Topic Control
Text I
IPO: 1 Who is Stephen?
Suspect I: 2 I am the one.
IPO: 3 Where are you from?
Suspect I: 4 From Delta State.
IPO: 5 Stephen, you are from Delta.
Suspect I: 6 Yes sir.
IPO: 7 2014 what happened?
Suspect: 8 ……. (Long pause) 2014 [….]
IPO: 9 you are repeating the same question I asked you. Yes, what happened?
Suspect: 10 Ok, when we collected one Camry from [.
IPO: 11 ….. who introduced you into robbery?
Suspect: 12 Abdulrahman.

Topic control is a tool that is employed within an interaction which may place constraints on the discourse options that are available to one of the interactants in a discourse situation. It refers to the initiation, maintenance and change of topic in conversation (Sacks et al, in MacLeod, 2010). The IPO initiated the interrogation in turn 1 and later changed the topic from the initial line of questions to ascertain the identity of the suspect to information-eliciting question. As the suspect appeared unwilling to co-operate fully in the interrogation process, the IPO interrupted him by changing the topic in turn 11 (….. who introduced you into robbery?) which was answered by the suspect.

ii. Questions and Answer Forms

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In syntactical-grammatical view, the term “question” is broadly understood as “any utterance requiring a response within the context of the interaction, regardless of form(interrogative, declarative, etc.); any formal question; and any utterance that receives a response as though it were a question” (Humphreys, 2002). Questions may serve a variety of different purposes. Černý (2010), distinguishes six different functions questions may have: (1) information, (2) confirmation, (3) agreement, (4) commitment, (5) repetition, and (6) clarification. The IPO is the questioner while the suspects are the answerers based on their institutional roles thus making the interaction an unequal one (Thomborrow, 2002).

Wh-Questions:
This is one of the types of question based on its grammatical form. Wh-questions require the suspect to provide new information (Maley, 1994). In text 1 (see appendix), there are instances of wh-questions in turns 1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 18, 25, 30, 32, 34, 39, and 47. The IPO commenced the interrogation with information-seeking questions that directed focus at one of the suspects bearing in mind that they are two. Instead of asking: ‘what is your name?’ He said: ‘who is Stephen?’ In turn 47, the question is conventionally open-ended and the purpose is to encourage the suspects to construct potentially elongated explanations. In order words, it is used to elicit more information from the suspect about how they snatch cars from unsuspecting motorists on the highway.

Repeat Question:
The IPO also employed repeat questions in the interrogation. Repeat questions according to McKenzie (2007) ask the source for the same information obtained in response to earlier questions. The aim is to confirm what had been said previously. There are instances in turns 5, 20, 27, 44, 46, 49, 51, 57, 59, 61 and 63. The employment of the repeat question by the IPO creates the room for the suspect to repeat the information he had initially given to the police as a form of confirmation.

Interpretation
Under interpretation, the activity type is an institutional discourse and the situational context is the interrogation of suspects who were alleged to have robbed unsuspecting motorists along Kaduna/Zaria Expressway. The IPO, as a representative of the police institution with a superior discursive identity introduced topic control as he initiated the interrogation by asking questions that centre on the identity of the suspect and later changed the trajectory of the interrogation by asking an information-seeking question that was resisted by the suspect. Topic control as used by the IPOs position and strengthen them to accomplish the preset agenda of the institution which is to obtain information from the suspects.

As it is obvious, questions are the focal point of any police interrogation. Their centrality is rooted in the fact that they constitute key mechanisms by which power can be exercised and resisted (Humphrey, cited in Černý, 2007). Questions as strategic discourse devices were employed in the construction of dominance and inequality in the interrogation. The IPO commenced the interrogation with information-seeking questions that directed focus at one of the suspects who is suspected to be the ring leader. The question introduces power differential between the interrogators who are the representatives of the institution and the suspects. There are also repeat questions in the text. Its employment by the IPO created room for the suspect to repeat the information he had initially given to the police. This grammatical structure serves two purposes. Apart from forcing explicitness from the suspect, it is used by the interrogators for the purpose of confirmation. This resource is therefore value-laden and functions in the interest of the police interrogators.

Explanatio
At the level of explanation, the
interrogators could be said to be engaged in an evidentiary interrogation which revolved around a rule-bound institutional matrix of investigation. The interrogation which is made up of the IPO and other officers is geared towards obtaining a first-hand account of the criminalities that were perpetuated by the gang from 2014 from one of the suspects (Stephen) who is deemed to be the leader of the gang. Central to the agenda of the interrogation is to establish a nexus between the suspects and the crimes that were committed within the stipulated time frame. The relationship between the IPOs and the suspect is controlling and authoritative. Based on the analysis of the obtained data, these strategic discourse devices are ideologically charged and therefore ideologically determinative particularly as they played a role in the determination of the culpability of the suspects.

Analysis of Text 2

2. This is a brief interrogation between the IPO and an elderly man who was accused of selling a parcel of land to two people.

A. Description

i. Interruption

There are examples of interruption which is a strategic discourse device for exercising power and control in a conversation and the violations of the speaker’s turn at talk. There are interruptions by the IPO in turns 13, 15, 17 and 19.

IPO: 13 You know there was a dispute over that land before you sold it?
SUS: 14 Make i tell you something [...] (Interrupting) [You are a fraudster!]
IPO: 15 Hold on. You are a fraudster!
SUS: 16 Oh! Okay my oga, make i tell you something.
IPO: 17 You...you must listen to me; I won’t listen to you because you have manifested the trait of a thief.

The IPO asked the suspect who is elderly a declarative accusative question which he (the suspect) resisted by trying to change the topic. The IPO interrupted the suspect through the use of a declarative sentence to declare him a fraudster. The suspect self-selects in the course of the interrogation in turns 14 (Make i tell you something) and 16 (Oh! Okay my oga, make i tell you something) which was once again interrupted by the IPO in line 17 (Hold on. You are a fraudster.) and turn 19 (You must listen to me; I won’t listen to you because you have manifested the trait of a thief).

ii. Topic Control

The IPO commenced the interrogation by initiating questions that border on the identity of the suspect. However, in turn 9 (IPO: 9 Old man, do you know them?), he changed the topic of the interrogation by asking the suspect a probing question. The IPO maintained the topic in turn 11 (IPO: 11 How did you know them?) but in turn 13, he changed the topic by asking the suspect a declarative accusatory question. There is an attempt by the suspect who is elderly to resist by trying to change the topic, hence, the trajectory of the interrogation in turn 14. The IPO immediately took control of the topic by bringing it back to the pre-set agenda

iii. Questions and Answer Forms:

Polar Question:

The IPO commenced the interrogation with a polar question in turn 1 (IPO:1 Do you understand English?). He also employed it in turn 9 (Old man, do you know them?). Polar questions can in principle be answered by “yes” or “no”. The suspect answered in the affirmative while the IPO continued with the interrogation.

Wh-Questions:

There are also the employment of wh-questions which require the suspect to provide new information, and is thus less constraining and it is geared towards eliciting more information from the suspect. These were used by the IPO in turns 2, 5, 7, 11 and 20. Whereas turns 2, 5, and 7 were used to establish the identity of the suspect while turn 11 elicited genuine information from the suspect.

Declarative Accusatory Question:
There was the use of declarative accusatory question to accuse the suspect of having knowledge that the land was under contention yet decided to sell it in turn 13 (You know there was a dispute over that land before you sold it?). The question is therefore accusatory and aimed to elicit information from the suspect although the suspect resisted to answer the question.

iv. **Declarative Sentence:**

There are also declarative sentences in the text. As can be seen from the text, declaratives are normally used to initiate exchanges by putting forward information for negotiation. The IPO produced four declarative sentences in turns 15, 17, 19, and 21. It can also be used to express attitudinal opinion. For example, turns 15 (You are a fraudster!) and 17 (Hold on. You are a fraudster!) are examples of exclamatory declarative sentence which express attitudinal opinion (exclamative structure with declarative function) and are therefore allo-functional in structure. Allo-function is an instance in which a sentence can be grammatically shaped as one function, yet in actual execution, may serve a completely different purpose than suggested by the way it was constructed (Humfrey, 2002). He also expressed a strong attitudinal opinion about the suspect in turn 19 (IPO: 19 You….you must listen to me; I won’t listen to you because you have manifested the trait of a thief). ‘Must’ as a relational modal verb signals obligation on the part of the suspect to listen to the IPO while ‘won’t (will not) indicates that the IPO is not under obligation to listen to the suspect. Modal auxiliary verb with expressive value was used in lines 21 by the suspect.

SUS: 21 If I am permitted, I will return their money on Monday.

IPO: 22 (short silence) Old man, they will collect their money before you leave here.

The suspect made use of ‘will’ which signals willingness on his part to pay back the money has an expressive value while the IPO used ‘will’ which has a relational value indicates an obligation. The IPO maintained a short silence before he angrily ordered that the suspect would pay the money before he leaves the station.

v. **Pronouns - Participant Choices**

Lerner (1996:281) is of the view that ‘you’ singular provides a way to refer to the addressee of the speaker” and is used for addressing a singular recipient. The IPO used ‘you’ to position the suspect as ‘the addressed recipient’ in the interrogation. The pronoun ‘you’ was used 15 times by the IPO during the interrogation.

vi. **Vocabulary Choice**

A vocabulary is a set of familiar words within a person’s language and it serves as a useful and fundamental tool for the purpose of communication and the acquisition of knowledge. Focal vocabulary which is a type of vocabulary is a specialized set of terms and distinctions that is particularly important to a certain group or institution: those with a particular focus of experience or activity (Barnhunt, 1968). They may be used to convey particular negative or positive meaning and implications about in-group or out-group members which may have an
ideological basis. In order words, alternative vocabulary choices are created from divergent ideological positions and each side labels accordingly. The IPO used expression ‘old man’ to address the suspect in turns 9 (IPO: 9 Old man, do you know them?) and 22 (IPO: 22 (short silence) Old man, they will collect their money before you leave here.)

B. Interpretation

Under the interpretation of the text, the activity type is a police interrogation of an elderly suspect by an interrogation police officer who was accused of selling a piece of land under dispute. The first interpretation is interruption which is a strategic discourse strategy the IPO employed in the interrogation. By virtue of the institution he represents, the IPO is the powerful interactant and clearly feels free to trespass on the discoursal space of the suspect who is older from his turn completion. Although this interruption is met with resistance from the suspect in turns 16 and 18, the IPO took over control of the interrogation and got it back to the pre-set agenda. The interruption by the suspect which is a form of resistance could be interpreted from the perspective of the age of the suspect. In the northern part of Nigeria, as it is in other parts of the country, elderly folks have the prerogative to trespass in the discoursal space of younger people but, by virtue of the position the IPO occupies as the representative of the police institution, he effortlessly interrupts the suspect.

Under the interpretation of question forms, it was observed that the IPO employed various question forms as strategic discourse devices such as yes-no questions or polar questions which he engaged the suspect in talk while retaining the status as initiator and controlling the interrogation. They were produced by the IPO to produce information from the suspect (9, 11, and 20). There is also the use of a declarative accusatory question in turn 13 that was intended to compel the suspect to either affirm or deny knowledge about the circumstance surrounding the land. The suspect challenged the accusation by interrupting the IPO and tried to change the topic, however, he IPO maintained the pre-set agenda

Furthermore, he employed probing questions, which are more intrusive and requiring a more specific answer usually commencing with the active words “who”, “what”, “why”, “where”, “when” “which” or “how” (WH-questions). These strategic discourse devices give the institutional representative, in this case, the IPO a measure of control over the introduction of topics and hence the ‘agenda’ for the interrogation and in the same measure, they are geared towards eliciting more information from the suspect based on the land dispute. It is therefore noteworthy to state that these strategic devices have relational value as they put the questioner (IPO) in a powerful position, therefore making the relationship asymmetric.

There are also the used of modality in the text by the interrogating officer. These modality chosen by the IPO have consequences for the discursive construction of social relations. The IPO employed relational modal verbs that signal the authority of one participant in relation to others and in this case, the authority of the IPO in relation to the suspect. The IPO imposed obligation and insistence upon the suspect during the interrogation through the use of ‘must’ (line 19) and ‘will’ (lines 19 and 22). Must as used by the IPO has relational value and indicates obligation which presupposes that the suspect is under obligation to listen to him. The modal verb ‘will’ as used by the IPO in line 19 means that he is not under any obligation to listen to him (the suspect) and in line 22, it indicates insistence. On the other hand, the use of ‘will in line 21 by the suspect expresses his willingness to return the money he received for the land.

These relational modalities are of ideological interest because they construct an ideological positioning between the IPO and the suspect in the text. The IPO, through these modal verbs positions himself as the more powerful interactant in terms of power relations.

Finally, vocabulary choice was used by the IPO in his representation of language choice. The use of old man’ in lines 9 and 22 is an ideology of delegitimisation (Thompson, 1990). In many African communities, old people are
respected and valued. The use of the phrase ‘old man’ by the IPO instead for instance, ‘oga’, is an instance of language choice by the IPO that is pejorative and geared to convey a negative image of the suspect.

**C. Explanation**

Under the explanation of the discourse, the text under analysis is an interrogation between the IPO and an elderly land agent who sold a land under disputation. The case is a criminal case, therefore, the investigation is geared towards ascertaining the reason why the suspect sold the land and subsequently, when he is likely to return the money. Apart from the institutional context in this interrogation, there is also the cultural context at play. The suspect is an elderly man and culturally is revered based on the norms in the northern part of Nigeria. Although the interrogation is an unequal encounter, the suspect’s discourse could be said to be ideologically determinative. This stems from the employment of interruption as a form of resistance to challenge the IPO’s dominance and unequal discoursal space.

The IPO’s discourse on the other hand is ideologically determined by the employment of topical control, interruption, modality, pronoun, tense, question and answer forms to ideologically position him as the more powerful interactant in the interrogation and the strengthening of the unequal power relation between the IPO and the suspect which puts him in a position of authority regardless to the cultural context. These devices that were employed by the IPO brings order, dominance and asymmetry in a rule-bound police institutional matrix.

**Findings**

Based on the analysis of the data, this research has unmasked the potentials of the strategic discourse devices in the construction of ideological positioning which create dominance and asymmetry during interrogation. This result is not in tandem with the commonly held belief within the public domain that the police always use coercive power in obtaining confessional statement from their suspects.

Another very important finding from this study is that strategic discourse devices which were employed by the police are power-laden and goal-oriented. These strategic resources are fine-grained instantiations of power-at-work and therefore, they brought about dominance and asymmetry in the interrogation exercise. These strategic discourse include WH-questions (who, why, when, how, which etc.), declarative questions, repeat questions, topic control, modality, declarative sentence, vocabulary choice, pronoun and formulation. The analysis of the interrogation texts revealed that these strategic discourse devices gave the IPO who is the representative of the police institution a measure of control over the introduction of topics and hence, the agenda of the investigative interrogation in addition to the elicitation of high-quality information of evidentiary value. Therefore, strategic discourse devices in complicated and elusive ways are employed to produce and reproduce intended and unintended ideological effects during the interrogation of suspects.

**Conclusion**

This paper is an exploration of how the police employ language to reproduce, negotiate and maintain power, dominance and asymmetry during the interrogation of suspects in Gabasawa police station in Kaduna Police Command. It applied Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional model of CDA which involves description, interpretation and explanation in the analysis of obtained data. The aim is to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, dominance and asymmetry through the use of strategic discourse devices such as topic control, interruption, formulation, modality, tense, pronoun, vocabulary choice, declarative sentence and question forms during the interrogation of suspects. This study affirms that police interrogation is within the ambit of institutional
discourse which has its focus on the unequal distribution of power among participants. The paper establishes that the police employ strategic discourse devices that are value-laden and goal-oriented in its discursive practice particularly, during the interrogation of suspects. It submits that this discursive practice has ideological effects as it reproduces, negotiates and maintains power, dominance and inequality during the interrogation of suspects.

References


**Appendix**

**TEXT 1**

A case of stolen RAV 4 which occurred in Kaduna town on the 16th of August, 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPO:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Who is Stephen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspect I:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am the one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Where are you from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect I:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>From Delta State.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stephen, you are from Delta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect I:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes sir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2014 what happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>……. (Long pause) 2014 [….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>you are repeating the same question I asked you. Yes, what happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect:</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ok, when we collected one Camry from [</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>…. who introduced you into robbery?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect:</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Abdulrahman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Abdulrahman. That particular time what happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>He gave me one ehn … ehn (pause) revolver pistol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Abdulrahman gave you the revolver pistol?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>The policeman ehn… the soldier man what’s his name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect 1:</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>We call him UcheChinwe. He gave me the revolver pistol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Is he not the same person that gave you the revolver? Why did you refer to him as Abdulrahman?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect 1:</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>It is a long memory sir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO:</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Long memory?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect:</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Yes sir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO 1:</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Just tell us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPO 2:</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Na the long memory make you ….. make you mention other people`s name way no dey?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suspect: 24 Sorry sir.
IPO 1: 25 What are you sorry for?
IPO 2: 26 The more you implicate other people, the more you make
the case difficult for you. You remember this one you mention his name,
you remember this one, you mention his name. Why would you do that?
You don’t ‘don’t’- don’t have any … any … any evidence to back up what
you are telling us. Now that the case has been charged to court, tell us the
robbery you have carried out between 2014 with Auwal?

Suspect: 27 With Auwal?
IPO 1: 28 Yes with Auwal.
Suspect: 29 We collected Camry and sold it to Momoh and he is in detail and
a Rav 4 now and we sold it to Emeka in Abuja and Mercedes.
IPO 1: 30 What about the ones you did with others?
Suspect: 31 There is no other robbery that I carried out, without Auwal.
IPO 1: 32 What about with this guy, where did you know him?
Suspect: 33 It was in early 2015 that I know him and it was when I came to
Zaria.
IPO 1: 34 Who was the first person that you mentioned?
IPO 2: 35 Among the arrested guys.
Suspect: 36 I mentioned Sunday and the other guy whom we came here
together and the other woman.
IPO 1: 37 Ok! Who mentioned the rest?
Suspect: 38 It is Auwal sir.
IPO 1: 39 Who was your first syndicate member that you introduced?
Suspect: 40 It is Auwal sir.

IPO 1: 41 Then what are we talking about!(IPO conversing indistinctly with colleagues).
IPO 1: 42 You robbed a Mercedes, a Camry and a Rav 4. Along where?
Suspect: 43 Along Kaduna/Zaria Road.
IPO 1: 44 Kaduna/Zaria Road you robbed a Camry, Kaduna/Zaria road you
robbed a Rav 4, the Mercedes?
Suspect: 45 The same road.
IPO 1: 46 The same road.
IPO 2: 47 How did you rob these cars?
Suspect: 48 We wait where the road is bad because we know that the car will
slowdown. We come out and throw wood and snatch it.
IPO 1: 49 Snatch?
Suspect: 50 Yes sir, with a pistol.
IPO 1: 51 With a pistol?
Suspect: 52 Yes sir.
IPO 1: 53 Did you kill somebody?
Suspect: 54 No sir.
IPO 1: 55 But you shot somebody.
Suspect: 56 I shot somebody at the hand.
IPO 1: 57 At the?
Suspect: 58 At the hand sir.
IPO 1: 59 Ok. The owner of?
Suspect: 60 Rav 4.
TEXT 2: This is a brief interrogation between the IPO and an elderly man who was accused of selling a parcel of land to two people.

IPO: 1 Do you understand English?
SUS: 2 Yes oga.
IPO: 3 What is your name?
SUS: 4 My name is Sarki John
IPO: 5 Where do you live?
SUS: 6 I dey live for Goni Gora
IPO: 7 What is your occupation?
SUS: 8 I be land agent.
IPO: 9 Old man, do you know them?
SUS: 10 I know them.
IPO: 11 How did you know them?
SUS: 12 I was the one that sell land to them.
IPO: 13 You know there was a dispute over that land before you sold it?
SUS: 14 Make i tell you something […]
IPO: 15 … (Interrupting) [You are a fraudster!]
SUS: 16 Make i tell you something […]
IPO: 17 (interrupting) [Hold on. You are a fraudster; and you claimed to have sight problem.
SUS: 18 Oh! Okay my oga, let me tell you [something.
IPO: 19 You…you must listen to me; I won’t listen to you because you have manifested the trait of a thief.
IPO: 20 … Ah! ah!! (brief silence). It is okay. What do you want to donow that there is a dispute over the land?
SUS: 21 If you permit me, I will return their money on Monday.
IPO: 22 (short silence) Old man, they will collect their money before you leave here