

**Ideological representation of *self* and *other* by students and authorities
in newspaper reports on students' protests in selected universities
in southwestern Nigeria**

Temitope Michael Ajayi*

Department of Linguistics, University of Ibadan

Damilola Isaac Ademola

Department of Linguistics, University of Ibadan

(First received 3.5.2020; final version received 6.10.2020)

ABSTRACT

This study examines language use in press releases by student representatives and authorities of selected Nigerian federal universities on students' protests, with particular emphasis on the ideological representation of *self* and *other*. Data were sourced from online newspaper reports on students' protests in three randomly sampled federal universities in southwestern Nigeria: University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, and University of Ilorin. Data were analysed with insights from van Dijk's (2004) Critical Discourse Analysis. Findings reveal the discourse is characterised by ideological strategies of positive *self*-representation and negative *other*-representation that thrive on discursive moves as lexicalization, negative description of actor's action, polarization, evidentiality, comparison, number-game, vagueness, counterfactual, categorization, implication, norm expression, and presupposition, among others. While the student representatives depict school authorities as wicked, anti-students' welfare and oppressive, school authorities project themselves as proactive, efficient, and competent; representing the student representatives as naive, infantile and corrupt.

Keywords: students' protests, school authorities, ideological representations, Nigerian universities

RESUMEN

En este artículo se estudian los comunicados de prensa de representantes estudiantiles y de autoridades de universidades nigerianas relativos a protestas estudiantiles, tomando especialmente en cuenta las representaciones ideológicas de *self* y *other* en el discurso. Los datos se recolectaron de diarios en línea que informaban sobre las protestas de los estudiantes en tres universidades federales del sudoeste de Nigeria: la Universidad de Ibadan, la Universidad Obafemi Awolowo y la Universidad de Ilorin. Los datos se analizaron según la propuesta del Análisis Crítico del Discurso de Van Dijk's (2004). Los resultados revelan que estos discursos se caracterizan por autorrepresentaciones positivas y representaciones negativas del otro y que abundan en lexicalizaciones, polarizaciones, evidencialidad, comparaciones, juegos numéricos, vaguedad, categorización, implicación, contraste, categorización, reglamentación y presuposición, entre otros. Mientras que los representantes estudiantiles describen a las autoridades como malvadas, opresivas y opuestas al bienestar estudiantil, las autoridades se proyectan como proactivas, eficientes y competentes, describiendo a los representantes como infantiles, ingenuos y corruptos.

Palabras claves: protestas estudiantiles, autoridades universitarias, gestión universitaria, representaciones ideológicas, universidades nigerianas

*Corresponding author's email address: michealtemitope@yahoo.com

Introduction

The university system is generally a microcosm of the larger society (Etadon, 2013). Just like every other society, the university system is faced with multi-dimensional conflicts, which include conflicts generated by students. Unfortunately, this has become part and parcel of Nigerian academic system in tertiary education. Aluede (1995, p. 2001) notes that if there is anything highly predictable about Nigerian universities, it is the fact that the students would riot in any academic semester or academic year. This untoward trend is one of the many challenges of the Nigerian university system. Thus, given this menace, the phenomenon has attracted fair scholarly attention. The focus of studies by Ajayi (1998), Adedeji (2000), Aluede et al (2005), Alimba (2008), Ajibade (2013) has been on the possible causes of students' unrest in Nigerian universities. Some of the issues noted as being responsible for this untoward development are poor facilities, hikes in school fees, and perceived poor managerial skills of university managements, among others. However, none of these studies has attempted to investigate the linguistic/language dimension in crises arising from student-management face-off. This oversight is a major gap in research on students' unrest and activism in Nigeria. Given the important role language plays in students' activism and managements' administrative activities, particularly in the context of students' protests, it is important to examine how the two ideological groups (students and school management) effectively deploy linguistic resources to project and achieve their ideological goals in crisis situations. In particular, this study takes a pragmatic-cum-critical approach to teasing out the persuasive and ideological strategies in press releases of students and school authorities on students' unrests/protests, with a view to detailing the pattern of language use in student-management "conflict" discourse in Nigeria.

An overview of students' protests in Nigeria

In Nigeria, cases of students' unrest were reported as far back as 1945 (Aluede et al., 2005). Historically speaking, violent demonstrations in Nigeria started in the University of Ibadan. Alimba (2008) confirms that in 1971, the first violent students' protest took place there and led to the death of a student named Kunle Adepeju. Ayo (2006) as cited by Etadon (2013), posits that there has been a preponderance of student-related crises in the Nigerian university system, which is becoming worrisome to many stakeholders. According to him, this negative development is so common that many (Nigerians) are conditioned to believe that crisis is an inevitable factor in Nigerian university education. In connection to this, Etadon (2013) notes that between 1989 and 1997, major unrest and outbursts by Nigerian university students more than doubled. He also noted that several other incidents of student unrest, hostile and devastating in nature, have thereafter been recorded in the developmental process of tertiary education in Nigeria, thereby making the educational terrain highly un conducive for teaching, research, and rendering of services to the public.

Obianyo (2003) observes that the alarming increase in students' unrest, riots and vandalism, especially at the post-primary level, have mostly been caused by heads of institutions, because they lack the adequate skills and the knowledge required for checking and managing students' activities and activism. In view of this, Etadon (2013) recommends that school authorities should adapt their problem solving and mediation strategies to prevent conflicts and crises between students and faculty. Omonijo et al. (2014) note that there have been several students' protests in Nigerian universities, including the universities of Nsukka, Nigeria, Lagos, Ilorin, Ibadan, Jos and Port Harcourt. They note that these crises have led to the temporary closure of these universities and the death of several students at different times. Lawal (2003) reports loss of lives, destruction of public and private property, disruption of academic programmes, loss of revenue to government agencies, distraction of government's attention from other important sectors of the economy, among the consequences of students' protests in Nigeria. Aluede et al. (2005) argue that students' demand for participatory democracy, especially on matters affecting their academic life, is likely to continue and even increase. Hence the need for school authorities to be more proactive and circumspect in their administrative engagement with the students.

Analytical tool: van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis

As noted by Weiss and Wodak (2002), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has its origin in Classical Rhetoric, Text Linguistics, Socio-linguistics, and Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics. In the opinion of van Dijk (1998 and 2001), CDA is an analytical tool that conceives of language as a form of cultural and social practice; it is a linguistic approach that allows the analyst to describe and interpret social life as it is represented in talk and texts. Van Dijk further notes that CDA focuses on the connection between power and discourse, especially how 'social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). Put differently, CDA is concerned with the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. According to Fairclough (2001), critical discourse analysts concern themselves with teasing out the social and cultural assumptions and ideologies embedded in all forms of language deployed by people. As spelt out by Fairclough and Wodak (1997), construction and reflection of social and political issues in discourse, the negotiation and performance of power relations through discourse; the reflection and production of social relations through discourse, and the production and reflection of ideologies through discourse are some of the basic principles of CDA. In line with this position, Reisigl and Wodak (2009) state that CDA is mainly preoccupied with analyzing covert as well as overt imbalance power relations, dominance and control, and discrimination as manifested in language.

Given its relevance, van Dijk's (2004) model of CDA is privileged for analysis in this study. His model advocates two main discursive ideological strategies: positive self-representation (semantic macro-strategy of in-group favouritism) and negative other-representation (semantic macro-strategy of derogation of the out-group). These two strategies can be identified through the analysis of actor description, authority, burden (Topos), categorization, comparison, consensus, counterfactuals, disclaimer, euphemism, evidentiality, example/illustration, generalization, hyperbole, implication, irony, lexicalization, metaphor, self-glorification, norm expression, number game, polarization, Us-Them, populism, presupposition, vagueness, and victimization. These are briefly explained below, following van Dijk (2004):

- Actor description: the way we describe actors or members of a particular society either in a negative or positive way.
- Authority: mentioning authorities to support one's claims. It is often related to the semantic move of Evidentiality and hence used as the basis for Objectivity and Reliability in argumentation. These authorities are: organization, people who are considered as moral leaders and experts, international organizations, scholars, media, church, or the courts (constitution).
- Burden (Topos): it refers to human or financial loss of a specific group whether small or big usually to victimize the group. It represents premises that are taken for granted, as self-evident and as sufficient reasons to accept the conclusion. Examples of burden-topos include financial burden or social burden; however, the implication is often financial.
- Categorization: assigning people to different groups.
- Comparison: an evaluation of the similarities and differences of one or more things relative to some other or each other.
- Consensus: creating agreement and solidarity.
- Counterfactual: "What would happen, if", is the standard formula that defines counterfactuals. It allows people to demonstrate absurd consequences when an alternative is being considered. Khan et al. (2019) view it as a persuasive argumentative strategy. They added that it is an expression to highlight what something or somebody would be like if certain conditions are created or not created.
- Disclaimer: presenting an idea as something positive and then rejecting it by the use of terms such as 'but' in the second sentence.

- Euphemism: the use of a word or a phrase to replace another with the one that is less offensive. It is a communicative tactic where the speaker tries to use milder or less harsh words instead of a derogatory or direct term.
- Evidentiality: using facts to support one's ideas. Claims or points of view in argument are more plausible when speakers present some evidence or proof for their knowledge or opinions.
- Hyperbole: a semantic rhetorical device for enhancing and exaggerating meaning. Hyperbole is considered as a linguistic strategy regarding the exaggeration of the language and an extra stress on something.
- Implication: deducing or inferring implicit information. It refers to the understanding of what is not explicitly expressed in discourse either in speech or in writing.
- Illustration/example: to clarify something by providing an example or a comparison.
- Irony: saying something and meaning something else or when the opposite of what is said can be inferred from the utterance.
- Lexicalization: an overall ideological strategy for negative other-representation through the semantic features of the words used.
- Metaphor: an expression used to refer to something that it does not literally denote in order to suggest a similarity. Van Dijk (2004) explains that abstract, complex, unfamiliar, new or emotional meanings may thus be made more familiar and concrete.
- Numbers Game: the rhetorical ploy of using exaggerated numbers and statistics to persuade the audience.
- Norm expression: expressions that reflect what 'we' should or should not do.
- Populism: the political doctrine or philosophy that proposes that ordinary people are exploited by the privileged classes and supports their struggle to overturn this dominance. A quality of appealing to the ordinary people. I think this definition needs reviewing and relocating (or it could just be dropped). It is not a discursive strategy, and placed here it may confuse the readers.
- Polarization: categorizing people belonging to the US with good attributes and *THEM* with bad attributes.
- Presupposition: commonly shared knowledge between people or the ideas taken for granted in a proposition.
- Vagueness: creating uncertainty and ambiguity, that is, expressions that do not have well-defined referents, or which refer to fuzzy sets. Vague quantifiers ('few', 'a lot'), adverbs ('very'), nouns ('thing') and adjectives ('low', 'high'), among other expressions, may be typical in such discourse.
- Victimization: telling negative stories about people who do not belong to a particular in-group. It also shows that members of the in-group are victims of unfair treatment by the members of the out-group.

As noted by Ajayi (2020), although the list is exhaustive, the two basic categorisations, positive self-representation and negative other-representation, proposed by van Dijk, can accommodate some of the other ideological discursive strategies identified in this study but which are not on the list.

Methodology

Data for this study were drawn from newspaper reports on student protests in selected federal universities in southwestern Nigeria—University of Ilorin (UNILORIN), University of Ibadan (UI), and Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)—and published on popular Nigerian news sites (*Daily Trust*, *The Nation*, *Pulse.ng*). The selected universities were randomly sampled from the five first and second generations universities situated in the region. Similarly, the choice of the online versions of the papers and reports sampled was informed by the inability to access the hard copies (offline versions) given the relative non contemporaneity of the periods of the protests and the time of data gathering. Visiting the universities to access their archives and read bulletins on student protests and management reactions did not prove fruitful. Thus, the reports that were sampled were those found

available in the online ‘archive’ of the selected newspapers. The reports comprised students’ representatives’ press interviews/releases and school authorities’ responses as captured in the selected newspapers. In total, four reports were utilised as data. In line with the discursive focus of the study, relevant excerpts of the press releases/reports were purposively selected for analysis. Data were subjected to critical discourse analysis, with particular reference to van Dijk’s (2004) model. In our data presentation and discussion, we present the students’ agitations first and later present the authorities’ responses/positions.

Data presentation and analysis

Students’ agitation and negative *other*-representation

This ideological discursive strategy is often deployed to emphasise the negative aspect of the ‘other’ in a discourse (Ajayi, 2020). It is strategically deployed by discourse actors to establish the US versus THEM dichotomy between them and *others*, by emphasizing the perceived negative aspects of the other. This ideological mapping of *self* against the *other* with the discursive aim of negatively representing the *other* manifests in the excerpts below, which contain students’ statements:

Excerpt 1

OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY (OAU)

The university proscribed the students’ union for the body’s resistance to the “unfavourable accommodation policy which tried to increase the tuition fees at the Faculty of Health Sciences to N85, 000. The accommodation policy was a wicked response to the crisis of congestion on the university campus. The residential hostels which accommodated about 70 percent of the students were decongested by driving the majority of the students to town/off campus, a situation which degenerated into a transportation crisis on the campus. Students who are now living in town are facing untold hardship of hike in house rent and exposed to a series of crimes and attacks.

The Nation Newspaper:

thenationonline.net/oau-students-protest-alleged-proscription-of-unionism/amp/, 15 April 2019

In the excerpt presented above, the use of negative other representation is persuasively deployed by student actors in the Obafemi Awolowo Students’ Union activities to create a negative image of the university authorities in the context of a prevailing crisis. The crisis-cum-protest was caused by students’ resistance to perceived anti-student welfare policies introduced by the school authorities. As observed in the excerpt, the student actors, in an attempt to decry the authorities alleged proscription of the Students’ Union, employ the *negative description of the other’s action* strategy to present the authorities, its ‘negative policy’ as well as the effects of such on the students. In particular, expressions such as “*unfavourable accommodation policy*”, “*wicked response*” to the “*crisis of congestion*”, “*untold hardship*”, and “*exposed to series of crimes and attacks*” are strategic *lexicalisation* resources purposively used in this regard to create an impression the students of the university now live in an atmosphere of victimization, insecurity, oppression and repression under the leadership of the authorities. In the excerpt, the author subtly presents the authorities of OAU as wicked and inconsiderate for coming up with a proposal to ‘unjustly’ increase the faculty fee of Health Science students (in the face of the poor economic condition of many students and their parents. Also, the author resorts to the calculative and strategic deployment of numbers game by quoting the actual amount proposed in the new payment regime (85,000 naira, which is assumed to be far above what was being charged before) to further indict the Management and appeal to the psyche of members of the public to see the reason their (the students) action (protest) is justifiable.

Excerpt 2

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN (UNILORIN)

This is rather unexpected, shocking and challenging. This cannot stand. I have called an emergency meeting with all the SUG executives and all faculty presidents and we shall release a comprehensive statement after”. The increment varies from faculty to faculty, a student who spoke on the condition of anonymity said. Mass Communication students that hitherto paid N10, 700 would now pay N23, 000 while those in the Faculty of Agriculture would pay N40,000 instead of N17,000.

Daily Trust: dailytrust.com.ng/unilorin-students-resist-fees-increase.html, 8 November, 2018

In the above excerpt, the Students' Union (SU) president reacts to the alleged fee hike announced by the authorities of the University of Ilorin. In this reaction, the student leader strategically constructs an ideological negative other identity for the school authorities, using a number of discursive tools. For instance, *lexicalizations* such as 'rather unexpected' 'shocking' and 'challenging', are deployed by the SU president to demonstrate the level of surprise, shock, and difficulty the purported increase in fee has currently brought to the students as well as the impending hardship that would come with it in the future. He also employs the discursive tool of *polarization* 'we shall' with emphasis on inclusive first person plural pronoun (subject) 'we' to map an identity-cum-ideological boundary between the students and the school authorities, as well as declare the SU ideological position against the 'anti-student' policy of the authorities.

From this stance, he carefully projects the school authorities as a common enemy whom university students, as represented by their SU representatives, are rising up against in their protest. He equally utilizes *norm expression* to foreground his in-depth knowledge about the ideological structure of norms, values and modus operandi of student unionism. For instance, the expression 'we shall release a comprehensive statement after' is an explicit norm expression strategically deployed to represent himself (as the Students' Union representative) as a responsible and proactive representative who knows it is his statutory responsibility to release comprehensive statements on issues that focus on students' welfare (as the one presented in this release above). This projects the SU as being ideologically pro-student and not as a group whose loyalty has been compromised. In the latter part of the report, another student actor resorts to a *numbers game* to reinforce his/her argument that the Management is not fair in its decision. In doing this, he or she gives number details in order to foreground his/her adequate knowledge of the revised fee situation in the university. From his/her analysis, the fee increase for Communication and Faculty of Agriculture students, for instance, is more than 100%.

Excerpt 3

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN (UI)

At the Congress, it was resolved among others, that the Student's Identity Card, which is a standing levy in the Fees of every Student must be received before Examinations commence, and every parent, even the school management knows the simple nature of contracts- that where consideration has been paid, contract has been made.... In fact, even when the fees fraudulently skyrocketed for no given reason from 650 naira last session to 2000 naira this session, an increment of over 200 percent, Uites still remained patient. But this has led to our students going through serious security harassment from members of the Nigerian Police Force outside the University environment. Many of our members have even lost credible scholarship and grant opportunities just because they couldn't identify themselves properly as Students. After all, anyone can claim to be a Student, only the Identity Card tells the difference
 Pulse.ng:pulse.ng/communities/student/university-of-ibadan-university-senate-release-statements/e7ysrqm.amp, 30 May, 2017 student-union-

As can be gleaned from the excerpt above, the bone of contention between the students and university authorities is the non-issuance of students' identity cards. In the initial part of the excerpt, the Students' Union President, in an attempt to construct a negative image for University authorities over their alleged failure to issue identity cards to students as and when due, resorts to the deployment of the discursive strategies of *presupposition* and *implication*. He begins by disclosing the consensus reached as well as the resolution made at the Students' Union congress, which hinged on getting the students' identity cards before examination starts. It is on this note that he presupposes that there is a contract between the students and the school authorities, and by inference, the students have fulfilled their own side of the contract (having paid their school fees which include the charges for identity cards), while the management has 'failed' to do same. The phrase 'the simple nature of contracts' is presuppositionally employed to imply that authorities, who are expected to know what it means to respect contractual agreements, have failed to do so in this instance. Thus, by implication, the authorities have not been fair in its handling of students' affairs, particularly as it relates to the issue of identity cards. The use of the legal term 'consideration' by the SU President demonstrates his wealth of insight and knowledge on contractual agreements as a way of adding validity to his presupposed claim.

In the latter part of the release, he deploys elements of *self-glorification* and indictment of the *other* (mainly through strategic *lexicalisation*, *evidentiality*, and *number game*) to further reinforce the negative image of the school authorities. In particular, he claims the students, as responsible and peace-loving, have maintained their calm and ensure peace on the campus even when the authorities “had *fraudulently (lexicalisation)* increased the school fees by 200% (*number game*), and had failed to issue the students their identity cards, even after they had paid for it”. Making recourse to *evidentiality* to support his claim, he further posits many students (*vagueness*) have even lost many scholarship opportunities, just as many have suffered harassment in the hands of law enforcement agencies like the police on account of the non-issuance of identity cards by the school authorities. This speech, replete with discursive moves of evidentiality, numbers games and presupposition ideologically indicts the authorities and negatively projects them as being ‘mean’, incompetent, and unfair to the students, hence the aptness and appropriateness of their protest.

The authorities’ reactions and positive *self*-representation

Following the view of van Dijk (2004), positive *self*-representation is an ideological discursive strategy deployed by a discourse actor to project him/herself positively with the aim of achieving a particular goal (Ajayi, 2020).

Excerpt 4

OAU

The unionism in the University was never proscribed but suspended “because of infighting among the students over union dues and this could result in loss of lives and property if not checked promptly... they are exhibiting undue youthful exuberance. They are always fighting over union dues and if this was not attended promptly to could claim lives and loss of property. The university only suspended the central union not at the departmental, faculty and halls of residence. The University Management was more concerned about peaceful conduct and protection for serious students, who were determined to be focused on their academic pursuit. On the accommodation, we have 6,750 freshers in need of where to stay and we have only space for 6,000 against the over 33,000 students’ population. This is the reason the management is calling on well-meaning Nigerians to come and build hostels in support of the school. Also, about their demands for adequate funding of education, they know appropriate quarter to direct their demand.

The Nations: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/thenationonlineng.net/oau-students-protest-alleged-proscription-of-unionism/amp/>, 15 April 2019

In response to the students’ demonstration, a number of discursive strategies are employed in the excerpts above by the University’s spokesperson, to project the positive US and negative THEM dichotomy between the authorities and the Students’ Union. On the first line of the excerpt, the representative of the authorities projects a good image for the authorities with the deployment of a positive self-representation strategy in order to correct the wrong impression members of the public must have had from the account of the student actor(s), representing the Students’ Union. Resorting to the use of claim negation, the authorities, as represented by the school’s Public Relations Officer, debunk the claims of the students on the proscription of the students’ union by categorically claiming “*The unionism in the university was never **proscribed** but **suspended***”. With the use of *evidentiality*, the authorities provide reasons to justify this action: students’ unionism was suspended ‘*because of infighting among the students over union dues*’. Through this strategic use of the devices mentioned above, the Management indicts the Students’ Union, describing its activities (infighting over dues) as capable of disrupting peace and the smooth running of the school calendar, hence, the authorities cannot but carry out their statutory role of providing an atmosphere of peace on the campus (by suspending what they deem to be the harbinger of violence on the campus).

The authorities equally employ the categorisation strategy to categorise students pursuing the cause of the Students’ Union as ‘unserious’ people who, if not dealt with, would disrupt the activities of the ‘serious’ ones. This step projects the authorities as proactive, reasonable, and competent (self-glorification), and the Students’ Union as irresponsible, reckless, corrupt and trouble-making. In the latter part of the excerpt, the Management resorts to ‘numbers game’ (carefully presenting figures of the bed spaces available: 6,000 as opposed to 33,000 students seeking accommodation) to convince members of the public that the students’ arguments and claims are baseless, and that the management

has only demonstrated shrewdness and administrative competence by decongesting the accommodation facilities on the campus for the sake of students' safety. And as a way of presenting itself as a body whose *modus operandi* is ideologically and radically different from that of the advocates of students' unionism, the Management deploys the discursive strategy of polarisation through pronouns such as 'we', 'they', and 'their' in its responses to the various 'false' claims peddled by the students' representatives.

Excerpt 5

UNILORIN

We wish to put record straight and assure our ever responsible students of the management's good intentions. The University of Ilorin, in line with federal government policy, does not charge tuition fees. What we have here is university and faculty charges... The items that make up the charges are simply fundamental and basic. For instance, examinations remain sacrosanct, same for provision of state-of-the-art health and library facilities, in addition to stable electricity and uninterrupted water supply. The implication is that what is obtainable about 12 years ago can no longer sustain the university in this century. It should be pointed out that even with the slight adjustment in charges, Unilorin is still among the lowest charging federal universities in the country. This can be confirmed by comparing statistics of what is payable in other universities. This does not foreclose negotiation between the management and student leaders for reasonable concession. Even if only one naira is added, there will be reaction. The question is how justifiable is the reaction in the face of current realities in providing qualitative university education with needed facilities that guarantee such.

Daily Trust: <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/we-do-not-charge-tuition-in-unilorin-management.html>, 4 November, 2018

Speaking on behalf of the authorities of the institution, the Director of Information and Corporate Affairs of UNILORIN employs a number of discursive moves to positively represent authorities. For instance, polarisation is deployed in the opening of the release to ideologically separate the authorities from the students, and by extension to distance it from the ignoble claims and actions of the student agitators. This is manifested in his strategic deployment of exclusive 'we' in the expression '*we wish to put record straight*', as he provides counter claims, one of which is that UNILORIN, as a law-abiding university, whose actions are guided by the Federal Government policies, does not engage in the practice of charging fees, contrary to the position of the student agitators that the authorities have increased students' school fees. This is further supported with a claim-countering argument that thrives on strategic lexicalisation that the purported fees are 'university and faculty charges' which are just *mere slight* adjustments of the existing charges. The authorities' spokesperson further makes recourse to the discursive move of comparison, to positively represent UNILORIN as one of the 'lowest charging federal universities in the country'. Presenting authorities as democratic and respectful of students' opinions, he claims that authorities are ready to dialogue with the students to 'reach a reasonable concession'. As intended by the counterfactual argument the release of the Management is imbued with, the students should reasonably and logically imagine what would be their fate and that of the institution in general if charges were not reviewed (upwardly). This is done to appeal to the psyche of the students and persuade them to share the position of the authorities that the previous charges could not sustain the effective running of the university's affairs, particularly as it relates to the provision of facilities that would make life comfortable and safe for all and sundry on the campus. All these discursive-cum-ideological strategies are carefully and pragmatically deployed by the authorities as represented by their spokesperson, to project the positive image of the Institution which the student agitators had earlier negatively constructed with claims of an abysmal and unjustifiable increase in school fees and 'unfriendly' postures by the Management.

Excerpt 6

UI

Management has tried to explain to students the challenges with delay in production of their Smart Identity Cards. The new chip-based smart ID card has multiple functionality as it can be used for identification, access control, attendance system, and library facility usage, login access to computers, payment for services, e-learning and medical information storage.

Pulse.ng: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.pulse.ng/communities/student/university-of-ibadan-university-senate-student-union-release-statements/e7ysrqm.amp>, 30 May, 2017

In the excerpt above, the UI authorities, through the discursive move of self-glorification, positively presents itself to the general public by informing that the management ‘*has tried to explain to students the challenges with delay in production of their Smart Identity Cards*. This, by implication, suggests that university authorities are not irresponsible or unresponsive; they do not leave out students in its managerial responsibilities. In other words, taking time to explain to the students the reasons for the delay in the issuance of identity cards depicts the university faculty as democratic and concerned with students’ welfare and general well-being on campus. To convince the students that the authorities have good intentions, they strategically emphasise what the students stand to gain with the peculiar features of the new identity cards. It is a smart identity card that could be used for identification, access control, attendance system, library access, and payment for services, among others. University authorities seem to think it necessary to quickly change the negative image that students’ representatives have built of university policy: they counter their attack on fees hike and identity cards by saying that if students had paid their (slightly raised) fees they would now have their smart identity cards.

Conclusion

This study has attempted a discursive analysis of the ideological representation of the *self* and the *other* by students and authorities of selected federal universities in southwestern Nigeria as published in the press releases and newspaper reports on students’ protests. Data comprised press releases by student activists and authorities of three federal universities: University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, and University of Ilorin, and were sourced from the online versions of The Nation, Daily Trust, and Pulse.ng. Data were subjected to critical discourse analysis, with particular reference to van Dijk’s (2004) model of critical discourse analysis. Findings reveal that the discourse is characterised by ideological strategies of positive *self*-representation and negative *other*-representation that thrive on discursive moves such as lexicalization, negative description actor’s action, polarization, evidentiality, comparison, number-game, vagueness, counterfactual, categorization, implication, norm expression, and presupposition, among others. While the student actors depict school authorities as wicked, anti-students’ welfare and oppressive, actors representing the school authorities project themselves as proactive, efficient, competent and deem the students’ representatives in the SU as infantile and corrupt. In view of these ideological positions expressed above, it suffices to argue that the ideological goals of the major participants in student-management face-offs are often projected and pursued through the instrumentality of language. The school Managements deploy linguistic resources to demonstrate their institutional power and ‘wisdom’ to make policies believed to be in the interest of the entire academic system administered by them, students and their representatives resort to the use of linguistic devices to resist and condemn policies and directives perceived to be unfriendly to students. Both actors involved in this ideological ‘conflict’ have found the media a veritable platform to engage each other, project and pursue their ideological goals.

References

- Ajayi, T. M. (2020). ‘We are committed to the “change agenda”: tracking Ideological strategies in president Buhari’s 2019 *Independence Day* Speech. *Covenant Journal of Language Studies*, vol 8(1), pp. 1-16.
- Ajayi, T. M. and Bamgbose, G. (2019). Ideologies and impoliteness strategies in online ethno-religious conflict among Nigerians. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics*, 8.1, pp. 60-80.
- Ajibade, D. (2013). Students’ crisis in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions: A review of the causes and management style. *Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 16.(1), pp. 56-76

- Alimba, C. N. (2008). Lecturer-students' perception of causes, effects and management patterns of students' unrest in tertiary institutions. *African Journal of Educational Management*, 11.1, pp. 170-189.
- Aluede, R. O. A. and Aluede, O.O. (1999). Student unrest in Nigerian universities. *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, 13, pp. 337-344.
- Aluede, O., Jimoh, B., Agwinede, B. O. and Omoregie, E. O. (2005). Students' unrest in Nigerian universities: looking back and forward. *Kamla-Raj J. Soc. Sci.*, 10.1, pp. 17-22.
- Daily Trust, (8 nov 2018). *Unilorin students resist fees increase*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/unilorin-students-resist-fees-increase.html>. Daily Trust, (2018). *We do not charge tuition in Unilorin – Management*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/we-do-not-charge-tuition-in-unilorin-management.html>.
- Etadon, F. I. (2013). Campus conflicts involving students' and university management in Nigeria: The case of the University of Ibadan. *Kamla-Raj Int J Edu Sci*, 5.(3) pp. 333-34.
- Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis: an overview. In T. A. van Dijk, (ed.) *Discourse as social interaction*. London, Sage, pp. 67-97
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). England, Pearson Education Limited.
- Khan, H. M., Adnun, H., Kaur, S., Khuro, R. A., Asghar, R. and Jabeen, S. (2019). Muslims' representation in Donald Trump's anti-Islam statement: A critical discourse analysis. *Religions*, 10: 115.
- Mulholland, J. (1994). *Handbook of persuasive tactics*. London, Routledge.
- Omonijo, D. O., Oludayo, O. O., Uche, O. and Eche, D. (2014). Violent protest in private universities in Nigeria: Implications for educational development. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 45.(4), pp. 352-359.
- Pulse.Ng, (2017). *University senate, student union release statements*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.pulse.ng/communities/student/university-of-ibadan-university-senate-student-union-release-statements/e7ysrqm.amp>.
- Rashidi, N. and Souzandehfar, M. (2010). A critical discourse analysis of the debates between Republicans and Democrats over the continuation of war in Iraq. *The Journal of Linguistic and Intercultural Education (JoLIE)*, 3, pp. 55-82.
- The Nation, (2019). *OAU students protest alleged proscription of unionism*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/amp/s/thenationonlineng.net/oau-students-protest-alleged-proscription-of-unionism/amp/>.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: a multidisciplinary approach*. London, Sage.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Discourse, ideology and context. *Folia Linguistica*, XXX/1-2, 11-40.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2004a). *Ideology and discourse: a multidisciplinary introduction*. www.discourse-in-society.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2004b). *Politics, ideology and discourse*. London, Sage.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Politics, ideology, and discourse. *Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*, 10.1016/B0-08-044854-2/00722-7.
- Weiss, G. & Wodak, R. (eds.) 2002. *Critical discourse analysis theory and interdisciplinarity*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (2001). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. London, Sage.