

Ideological discursive structures in political speeches: A critical discourse analysis of selected speeches of Mr. John Dramani Mahama

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Abstract

Language continues to be a very important tool in politics. This is because, in political communication, politicians usually employ linguistic structures that have ideological implications so that they will be able to win the trust, confidence and ratification of their audiences. Towards this end, this study looks at the role of language in creating ideology and ideological discursive structures in political speeches. The study specifically explores the linguistic expressions that carry the ideologies of President John Dramani Mahama. The study uses the qualitative research approach and adopts critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the design. The purposive sampling was employed and the theoretical lens of Fairclough and van Dijk's critical discourse analysis framework was used to analyse the data. The study discovered that Mahama conceals his ideologies in his speeches and that he employs discursive structures such as evidentiality, pronouns, rhetorical questions, metaphors and modal verbs. The study further revealed that the discursive structures also produce and sustain power and unequal power relations between Mahama and his audience. The study afforded much evidence to conclude that politics is a game that can be successfully played through a skillful employment of language.

Keywords: Discursive structures; Ideology; Linguistic expressions; Critical discourse analysis; John Dramani Mahama

1. Introduction

Researchers in the area of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) are quite unanimous in their thinking that there is a close affinity between language and politics (Ngula, 2021; Van Dijk, 1995; Chilton, 2004; Djabetey, 2013; Anderson, 2014; Lawan, 2016). For example, Ngula (2021) strongly argues that political speeches remain a vital genre within political discourse analysis and they have, since the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome, been central to the study of rhetoric in language. He is of the view that political speeches have become very important in human communication to the extent that even today, 'a political speech is regarded essentially as a rhetorical act, and political actors – most notably political leaders – are aware that to gain the trust, confidence, and ratification of their (potential) followers they must speak persuasively' (Ngula, 2021: 156). Language is therefore a very important rhetorical tool in politics. Chilton (2004:3) defines politics on two levels. First, Chilton indicates that politics is 'a struggle for power between those who seek to assert and maintain their power; and those who seek to resist it.' He also sees it as 'cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty and the like'. Chilton (2004) adds that in the above context, language is the resource to achieve that (conflict resolution). Essien (2003:14) also defines language as 'a system of structural arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which human beings make meaning and communicate, meet, interact with each other in a given community'. This definition shows that language is the means of socialisation in human life. It can be used to teach, direct, show power relations, manipulate, and persuade

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people etc. The position of Chilton (2004) shows that language is also a means through which politicians demonstrate their desire to rule. It is also through language that they show their competencies and power over others in a way that suggests that they are the best candidates and the most powerful. Chilton's definition further shows that politics provides an opportunity to resolve conflict and this can be done through language. Against this background, Wodak (2002) indicates that CDA aims to 'demystify' discourses by deciphering ideologies so that the weak in society will be liberated. She notes that CDA researchers aim at 'enlightenment and emancipation'. Lawan (2016) also maintains that: of all the resources available to man, his most cherished explored and exploited resource is language. Language provides the variant selections and possibilities which he uses to manipulate and control people to achieve desired interests, which are often politically inclined. What Lawan (2016) seeks to say is that language offers one the opportunity to project their ideologies on others and at the same wield some power over others. Language becomes a very important political tool and how skillful one is in its usage promises success in whatever endeavour the person is using the language for. This is what makes Anderson (2014) says that no matter how good a political leader is, his/her political success depends fundamentally on what s/he says and how s/he says it. This same idea is supported by Fairclough (2001a) when he indicates that language provides the resources for people to achieve their desires. It is thus a universal knowledge that society and for that matter social groups cannot thrive without language. The implication is that language revolves around all human endeavours be it politics, religion, education, entertainment and what have you (Essien, 2003). However, one unique feature of language is its propensity to mirror the actual intention of speakers, reveal their philosophies and ideologies in life as well as the representation of self and others (Van Dijk, 2003). All these human phenomena are in many cases masked by the linguistic resources which constitute the rhetoric of the speaker. This study is intended to deepen the close affinity between language and politics by investigating the discursive structures through which Mahama gets his messages and ideologies across to his listeners. The present study, thus, takes a CDA of the discursive structures in the speeches of former President John Dramani Mahama, the fourth president under the fourth republic of Ghana. The study is driven by the fact that Mr. Mahama has been perceived to be unique in speech delivery [among all the presidents] under the fourth republic (Djabetey, 2013; Ngula, 2021). This assertion is consolidated by his background as a communication expert and his mastery in exploiting the linguistic universe to achieve political aim (Ngula, 2021). This perception has also been collaborated by his public speeches which have won him some admiration both locally and internationally. His ability to exploit layers of linguistic structures to reflect his ideologies, philosophies as well as self and others have been found to be commendable (Dadugblor 2016; Afreh, 2016; Djabetey, 2013; Ngula, 2021). Again, Mr. John Dramani Mahama remains one of the presidents in Ghana who has occupied almost all the political offices in Ghana. He has occupied the office of an Assembly Member through to an MP, a Minister, a Vice President and ultimately as a President. His success is likely to be as a result of his skillful deployment of language. It is therefore the focus of this study to analyse some political speeches of John Dramani Mahama with the view to demonstrating the way in which he uses language to control and influence his people. The previous studies on political speeches, especially, in Ghana, have tended to be a description and analysis of style, innovative and persuasive strategies of politicians, and manipulation of linguistic structures to champion individual interests in presidential speeches (Adjei-Fobi, 2012; Anderson, 2014; Abokoma & Alofa, 2015; Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015; Gameli & Angmorteh, 2016). Not much has been done in terms of how these text reveal ideologies. There is thus the need to investigate how texts produce ideology, reproduce and sustain power and unequal power relations and how ideological or political undertones are projected in Ghanaian political speeches (by means of language). This study uses CDA to examine the role of language in creating ideology and sustaining power relations as well as ideological structures. These hidden ideologies and power relations are created, enacted and legitimated by the application of certain discursive structures. The researchers attempt to unravel these linguistic devices in selected political speeches of John Dramani Mahama. The researchers deem a study of this nature important as it will expose hidden motives that Ghanaian presidents' cloth in language in order to manipulate and/or control their audience through their speeches in order to win political power.

1.1. Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

1.1.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is rooted in the theoretical framework of Norman Fairclough (2012) and van Dijk's (2006) CDA. CDA evolved in the late 1970's as a product of Critical Linguistics (CL) which was developed by a group of Linguists and literary theorists at the University of East Anglia (Kress and Hodge, 1929). Their approach was based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). CL practitioners such as Trew aimed at 'isolating ideology in discourse and showing how ideology and ideological processes are manifested as systems of linguistics characteristics and processes'. This aim was pursued by developing CL's analytical tools (Fowler et.al, 1979, Fowler 1991) based on SFL. Following Halliday, scholars working in this group (CDA), led by Fowler (for example, Fowler, 1991), but also including names such as Kress, Hodge and Trew (for example, Fowler et al., 1991) were concerned to develop a social approach to linguistics which recognised power relationships as a central theoretical issue and text as its main unit of analysis. Five (5) figures are generally seen as key in CDA: Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Teun van Dijk, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak. Their position has been that text and talk have ideological implications. CDA scholars are therefore quite unanimous in their thinking

that CDA analyses issues of power, ideology, and that CDA has the preoccupation of unravelling hidden meanings embedded in language. In this regard, Van Dijk (1989) states that CDA is a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. He maintains that CDA examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts. In a similar vein, Fairclough (1989) defines CDA as discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causalities and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (p. 135).

To put it simply, CDA aims at making transparent the connections between discourse practices, social practices and social structures, connections that might be 'cloudy' to the layperson. Thus, CDA might be defined as 'fundamentally interested in not only analyzing opaque but also transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language' (Wodak, 2002, p. 12). In other words, CDA aims at 'investigating critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse)' (Wodak, 2009, p. 12). This shows that CDA offers a critical means to reveal potential hidden ideologies that cannot be comprehended by the weak in society. According to Flowerdew (2013: 50), 'CDA examines the social practices of individuals and institutions that involve concerns such as the use of and abuse of power, hegemony, ideology, social change as well as conflict, domination, race and leadership' Flowerdew (2013: 50) further notes that CDA sees discourse 'as a form of social practice and argues that all linguistic usage encodes ideological positions, and studies how language mediates and represents the world from different points of view'. This thinking of Flowerdew shows that it is the connection between ideas, language, power and the ordering of relationships within society that is important for those involved in CDA. In a similar vein, Dawn et al. (2012: 132) stress that 'CDA encompasses a large and loosely grouped body of work which focuses on 'the interconnectedness of discourse, power, ideology and social structure'. They maintain that the 'goal of CDA researchers is to unravel or denaturalize the ideologies within institutional discourses such that people become aware of the connections between language, power and ideology that are usually hidden from them' (Dawn et al., 2015, p. 132). Dawn et al. (2015) further indicate that these meanings are hidden by the application of linguistic devices and pragmalinguistic elements such as presupposition, implicatures, metaphor etc. CDA researchers argue that these devices are used because speakers and writers do not want to be called to account for making explicit statements that would reveal prejudices or stereotyped views (Van Dijk, 1995; Wodak, 2009). For Wodak (2009), such coded devices will not be understood by all and therefore the need to decipher for the weak. In this regard Dawn et al. (2012) indicate that "CDA has an important ideological aim: to show the connections between language, power and ideology and the 'hidden' effects they have on people (Fairclough 1989, p.2; Dawn et al., 2012, p.132). CDA has therefore become a useful analytical framework for analysing political discourse, and it has gained prominence in recent studies.

It is important to indicate that the emergence of research in CDA can be traced back to the 1980s when linguists such as Fairclough, Wodak, Van Dijk, etc. advocate a critical reading of or listening to texts with the view to uncovering the hidden messages (Van Dijk 1995: 18). Van Dijk (1995) maintains that this is done by paying attention to linguistic practices which conceal how they are manipulative and to create awareness to the 'subjected', even probably to the dominant group who may be unaware of them (Nkechi 2010, p. 14). Wodak (2009: 204) also indicates that the purpose of CDA is 'to analyse opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language'. Wodak's assertion shows clearly that there are hidden ideologies in text and the purpose of CDA is to unveil these hidden meanings, and the linguistic formations which mask these ideologies. This study is therefore situated in the right context (political discourse) as it also aims to uncover the hidden ideologies and ideological discursive structures in the speeches of John Dramani Mahama

1.1.2. Previous studies on CDA

A lot of researchers in and out of Ghana have therefore taken a critical reading of political discourse to unravel hidden meanings (Chilton, 2004; Abokoma and Alofa, 2015; Anderson, 2014; Lawan, 2016). Many of their studies have focused on the structural analysis of the text. Matic (2012) looks at ideologies and lexical choices in political speeches, and focuses on the political discourse structures within ideological strategies which have been used to express political stance through the topics the speakers approach. Matic reveals that the speakers use linguistic devices such as assertives, lexis, pronouns, intertextuality etc. as means of presenting their ideologies. Later, Abokoma & Alofa (2015) examine the roles of rhetoric in the famous Independence speech given by the first president of the Republic of Ghana, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on 6th March, 1957 when Ghana won her Independence from British rule. They maintain that the speech adopts the elements of rhetoric to inform, encourage and persuade its audience.

Similarly, in a related study, Sharndama (2015) critically analyses the inaugural speech of President Muhammadu Buhari which was delivered shortly after his swearing into office on the 29th May, 2015. In carrying out the analysis, Norman Fairclough's three dimensional analytical models was adopted. Following the model, the speech was subjected to description (text analysis) interpretation (processing/analysis) and explanation (social practice and analysis). The result of the analysis shows that an inaugural speech is a revelation of plans and hopes in the new government. The speech analysed particularly reveals the ideologies/plans on which the new government headed by President Muhammadu Buahari intends to operate. The most important ones include good governance, strengthened international relations, foreign policies and democracy, fight insecurity, corruption and improved power supply and the nation's economy. In a similar study, Anderson (2014) takes a stylistic analysis of selected political speeches delivered by John Evans Atta-Mills. Anderson selected speeches that span almost every sphere of the political life of Atta Mills, including a Campaign Speech, an Inaugural Speech, a Republic Day speech and a New Year eve's message to Ghanaians (all as president). The objective of the study was to unravel the stylistically significant features prevalent in the selected speeches to find out a possible relationship between the background of the speaker and the stylistic features, and to discover whether or not the inherent stylistic features project him as a man of peace, as he was acclaimed. Anderson (2014) adopted Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and Onah's Concept of Peace (as perceived in the African Traditional Culture) as his theoretical framework. The analysis of the data was structured on Fairclough's three dimensional models namely, text, discursive practice and social practice. The study reveals that Atta Mills employs stylistic features such as positive self-projection, repetition, codeswitching, biblical allusions, historical allusions, a fatherly imagery and the imagery of a preacher. He indicates that inherent in the stylistic features used by John Evans Atta-Mills was the speaker's mental disposition, his world view and traces of his background. The study further revealed that situating the speeches of Atta Mills in the social, political, cultural and religious context of the Ghanaian community projects Atta- Mills as a man of peace. Darko (2016) examines two speeches of Kwame Nkrumah by applying Halliday's Interpersonal Metafunction of Systemic Functional Grammar. After subjecting both speeches to Halliday's Interpersonal Metafunction of systematic functional grammar, the study reveals that Dr. Kwame Nkrumah prefers using positive polarity as opposed to negative polarity, attesting that as a good speaker, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah is assertive and confident in the delivery of his political messages. Moreover, the study reveals that Dr. Kwame Nkrumah uses more of the present tense in his speech than the future time (in his speech) which makes his speech definite, explicit and captivating enough to arrest his audience's attention. The analysis also shows that Dr. Kwame Nkrumah employs low and median modals so as to come to the level of everyone and not to frequently use high modals like 'must' to command them and this shortens the distance between him and his listeners. The author concludes that Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's speech is such that he ends up earning the trust, respect and confidence of his people as he is able to manipulate his use of pronoun appropriately. He indicates that Dr Nkrumah uses the pronoun 'I' to foreground his authority, yet he could find ways of using 'we' to identify himself with his people.

Clearly, the earlier studies have shed light on the fact that politicians try as much as possible to conceal their ideas in their speeches in a way that will go unnoticed. Ideologies such as dominance, inequality, racism, power, identity etc. are embedded in the discourses of political leaders. In essence, the analysis of the speeches of political leaders must not be taken for granted or even be analysed superficially. The saying that 'man is the sum total of his mind' coupled with the Biblical fact that 'out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks', it is important for audiences to subject the speeches of political leaders to critical scrutiny in order not to be gullible citizens. The people of Ghana, for example, must know the ideologies of those who seek to govern them. This can only be done when the mask is unveiled. And the mask is the language of the politician. Unfortunately, the earlier studies have focused on only the structural analysis of the text without taking cognizance of the ideologies that are embedded in the text. There is therefore the need to demystify the speeches and reveal the hidden ideologies in them to expose our political leaders. It is on the grounds of this that the researchers have chosen to do a critical discourse analysis of selected political speeches of Mr. John Dramani Mahama to ascertain the discursive means through which his ideologies are conveyed.

1.1.3. Previous Studies on John Dramani Mahama

Studies on the use of language by president John Dramani Mahama have gained prominence in recent years (Ngula, 2021; Mwinwelle, 2021; Gameli & Angmorteh, 2016; Djabetey, 2013). For example, Ngula (2021) looked at the language of John Dramani Mahama by focusing on his use of metaphor. His study contributes to the rhetoric of metaphor in political discourse by examining the range of (conceptual) metaphors used in the speeches of John Mahama of Ghana. Drawing on discourse and cognitive theories of metaphor, he explored Mahama's use of metaphors in his political speeches, arguing that, as a political speaker, Mahama uses metaphor in a conscious, consistent, and conceptually structured manner that projects his ideological stance on issues of politics and governance. The study revealed that Mahama draws on many conventional metaphors but uses them in creative and unconventional ways to depict culturally relevant situations, and to convey his political ideologies to his audience. The findings in this study do not only contribute towards a better understanding of Mahama's communicative style, but also foreground the persuasive

potential of metaphor for audience engagement in political discourse. In a similar study, Mwinwelle (2021) explored the lexico-stylistic analysis of selected political speeches of John Dramani Mahama. The focus of the study was to analyse the use of lexical items and the functions they play in the speeches from the stylistic perspective. The study was conducted within the framework of Halliday (1994) and Matthiessen's (2014) Systemic Functional Grammar. The researcher analysed the lexical items from a descriptive and interpretative approach. The study revealed that Mahama predominantly uses nouns in the speeches to refer to the plans and policies that his government wishes to carry out. The study also reported that Mahama uses simple vocabulary in order to reach his audience from different levels and backgrounds. Similarly, Djabety (2013) attempts a critical discourse analysis of the power relations, ideologies and persuasive techniques employed through language in selected campaign speeches of two presidential candidates - Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and John Dramani Mahama during the 2012 general elections in Ghana. The researcher considers the linguistic and textual features of the selected speeches and the socio-cultural situations that influence the speeches. The analysis employed critical analytical frameworks mainly in the CDA domain with other related frameworks serving as additions. It analysed these under three subtopics: descriptive, interpretational and explanation, to reveal the hidden underpinnings by which the speakers sought to persuade their audience to endorse their quest for power. The results of the study revealed that the selected candidates develop power relations and use strategies that are ideologically motivated in presenting their ideas to their audience. These strategies have an ultimate aim of persuading the audience to endorse their bid for the position of president. The relations developed and ideologies presented by the speakers are woven into the speeches implicitly and explicitly. The analysis revealed the following persuasive strategies among others: self-projections; blurred agency; literary devices; intertextuality, speech acts which are developed and supported by appropriate interpretation of the social practices of context towards persuading the audience. Djabety (2013) admits that there is the need to demystify these hidden ideologies in order to liberate the less privileged ones who are unable to decode the messages. This thinking echoes Lawan's (2016: 79) argument that 'the critical awareness of the power of language is the first step towards emancipation from the perpetual use of language by those in power to deceive ordinary citizens and maintain power through different choices of linguistic elements'. Djabety's study clearly brings out how political leaders use language to communicate their intentions to their audience in order to deceive them. Again, the study provides verifiable evidence on how political leaders hide behind language and manipulate their audience. Again, Gameli and Angmorte (2016) focus on the rhetorical strategies used in John Mahama's 2016 state of the Nation's address. The researchers used the rhetoric theory to analyse the 64 pages original address presented by the president of Ghana. The analysis revealed that Mahama relies on the use of identification with audience, acknowledgement and linguistic resources such as transitions, modality and persuasive narratives as discursive strategies to persuade the audience to give him a second chance in office as president of Ghana. In all, the speech revealed the speaker as credible and development minded. Afreh's (2016) also investigated metaphors used in some speeches of President Mahama in some of his political speeches. The study revealed that Mahama relies on [conceptual] metaphors as a discursive strategy to get his message across to his listeners. The study revealed that Mr John Dramani Mahama utilises language for political purposes.

The studies that have been reviewed so far give an indication that text and talk have hidden meanings, especially in political speeches. Some of the studies also show that president Mahama employs linguistic structures that have ideological implications so that he will be able to coerce and persuade his audience (Djabety, 2013, Ngula, 2021; Lawan, 2016). The earlier studies then provide impetus for an in-depth investigation to ascertain the discursive structures through which John Mahama conceal his ideologies. Furthermore, the earlier studies do not look at ideological structures. The current study is purposed to shed light on ideology and ideological structures in selected political speeches of president Mahama of Ghana. This is in view of the fact that the extant literature on Ghanaian political speeches (e.g; Djabety, 2013; Anderson, 2014; Abokoma & Alofa, 2015; Darko, 2016; Gameli et al., 2016) has left a considerable gap in the functional implication (from a CDA perspective) of the use of language in the political speeches of Mr Mahama.

2. Methodology

This study is epistemologically rooted in a social constructionist view of knowledge because the researchers sought to provide a philosophical ground for deciding what kinds of knowledge 'are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate (Creswell, 2013). For these reasons, qualitative instruments such as texts, documents, interview etc. are seen as appropriate in this inquiry and can best serve answering its research questions. It is commonly accepted that the main philosophical assumption upon which qualitative enquiry is based is 'the view that reality is constructed by individuals in interaction with their social worlds' (Cohen, 2007). In terms of ontology, the interpretive paradigm followed in this study is the philosophical view of idealism (Creswell, 2013), which assumes that the world exists according to people's understanding of it and therefore nothing has meaning without human interpretation and awareness (Creswell, 2013). Researchers [in the field of discourse analysis] see the interpretive paradigm as having two characteristics, and which is what influence our choice of this philosophical stance. First, the researchers following this

paradigm go through a thorough investigation of its data in detail, in order to interpret embedded meanings and interpretations, which can be in the form of written words, oral conversations, or even visual pictures (Creswell, 2003). Second, the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to ask open-ended questions, in order to come out with thick analysis. As this study is aimed at investigating the choice of language through which president Mahama projects his ideologies, it was necessary to employ the constructivist view of knowledge which allows us to offer deeper and subjective interpretations to the data (in this case, the speeches of John Dramani Mahama). Following the research paradigm, the researchers adopted the qualitative research approach. The researcher used this approach because of two main reasons. First, CDA itself as a method of analysis is qualitative in nature (Fairclough, 1992). Second, qualitative research approach is a text oriented study which offers a highly systematic and robust description, analysis and interpretation of events which are discovered in real life situations (Fairclough, 1992; Marianne & Louise, 2012). In consonance with the idea that language is a social practice, the method of systematic textual analysis design adopted in this study to unearth the way in which discourse operates in society came from the three dimensional frameworks proposed in Fairclough (1989, 1992), Marianne & Louise (2002) and Van Dijk's (1995) socio-cognitive analytical approach. This analytical design was adopted because 'it establishes the link between ideology and attitudes' (Min, 1997, p. 149). Thus, the socio-cognitive approach helped to understand and examined the ideologies that were inherent in the selected political speeches and the textual analytical approach helped to reveal the discursive structures that carry the ideologies. The analytical framework adopted in this study thus 'synthesises the external manifestation of ideology in discourse with the internal mental effects on the audience or listeners of the selected political speeches (Min 1997, p. 149). The essence of this integral analytical approach was thus to achieve a unified analysis of how ideologies in the selected political speeches of Nkrumah and Mahama were discursively formulated. With the sampling of the data, speeches of John Dramani Mahama (on the internet) were selected on the basis of how well ideologies and ideological discursive structures were embedded in them. There were a lot of speeches published on the internet and from which the researchers selected the most persuasive ones, which have ideological implications. The researcher also selected the speeches on the basis of their being considered as the most important ones of John Dramani Mahama (Djabete, 2013; Dadugblor, 2016). Again, the speeches were selected on the basis that they were considered by many as successful, not necessarily because of the presence of ideologies but because of the occasions during which they were made and the general effect they had on the general public (Van Dijk, 1995). This method of sampling ensured that the relevant data which met the objectives of the study were selected. At the end of the data collection, what the researchers did first was to do a general reading of the selected political speeches collected. The purpose of the first reading was to get familiarised with the information in the speeches. Then the researchers moved on to do a background study of the speeches taking into consideration the background information of the speeches, the purpose of the speeches, the occasion and the period in which those speeches were made.

In the next stage, the researchers moved on to select seven (7) speeches of President John Mahama. These speeches were selected because they were considered as the best ones which effectively helped to come out with the set objectives of this study. After this, the researcher read critically the speeches of Mahama to find out the hidden ideologies, and then the researcher moved on to look at the ideological discursive structures in the same speeches. The researcher further went on to look at how the linguistic structures show power relations.

After the analysis of Mahama's speeches, the researcher gave numbers to the various speeches to allow for easy references as:

- President John Dramani Mahama's Concession speech, December, 2016 – JDM01
- President John Dramani Mahama's Inaugural speech, 2016 – JDM02
- President John Dramani Mahama's speech at the IEA debate, 2012 – JDM03
- President John Dramani Mahama's state of the nation's Address, 2016 – JDM04
- President John Dramani Mahama's speech on Anti-Corruption, Corruption Day – December 10, 2015 – JDM05
- President's Mahama's speech on the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, General Assembly Hall, New York on Wednesday September 30, 2015

At the end of the above critical readings of the data collected, there was first the coding of the raw data. This involved grouping the data into various themes which are presented in the analysis section.

3. Analysis

3.1. Fluidity of pronouns

Traditionally, pronouns are defined as words that are used to replace nouns especially, because we do not want to repeat those nouns. The study shows that Mahama relies on pronouns to project his ideologies.

In **1**, Mahama uses pronouns ambiguously to refer to himself as a presidential candidate, to refer to the NDC party and himself as one, and further use same pronouns to refer to himself as a citizen of Ghana. Let us examine the extract **1** below:

- 1. Let me say that our desire for seeking re-election on December 7th is driven by our solid record in office and our commitment to build a prosperous and equitable society. Under the next NDC government, our economic performance will be deepened and diversified as the basis for the provision of the basic human needs of our people. We'll energize the entire country by creating a rapid expansion of the energy sector. Our infrastructure development will be intensified to catalyse and accelerate the transformation of Ghana. Our governance will be more thoroughly decentralized to enable citizens to access resources and demand accountability for services. Our private sector and facilitation programs will complement those of the public sector in our quest for accelerated growth and job creation. Our industrial development, notably in the energy sector, will be the basis for pursuing a value-added, diversified and productive economy. Our agriculture will be modernized to involve strong partnership between private agriculture investors and small holder peasant farmers in a manner that introduces capital, technology and expanded local and global market access (JDM02)

It becomes clear from **1** that Mahama is not consistent with his use of pronouns. For example, in 'our desire for seeking re-lection...' the pronoun 'our' refers to the NDC party and himself as part of the party. Again, in 'our economic performance will be deepened ...' Mahama refers to Ghanaians and himself as a citizen. Then again, in the sentence 'We'll energize the country by creating a rapid extension ...' Mahama uses the pronoun 'we' as a referent to himself and his government. This creative but ambiguous use of language is intended to influence the minds of the people not to see Mahama as a mere candidate but as someone who is part of them. There are therefore shifts and turns in the use of the pronouns. This is a way of persuading the people to see him in so many ways, not to see him as a politician.

Again, in example **2**, Mahama uses pronouns to show personal responsibility and at the same time solidarity. This can be seen below:

- 2. I will ensure that our society is less polarized and weighted down by the pressures of political differences (JDM03).

From **2**, it is seen that Mahama uses pronouns to show two things. First, he uses the personal pronoun 'I' to show self-responsibility and self-reference as a means of putting himself in a positive light. Secondly, he uses the pronoun 'our' to show solidarity as a means of creating a common ground between him and the people of Ghana. Thus, Mahama projects the ideology of positive self-representation through the use of pronouns 'I' and 'our'.

According to Sharndama (2015: 22), 'the use of pronouns in political discourse goes beyond substitution of a noun in traditional grammar to self-emphasis, self-responsibility, inclusiveness, solidarity and unity of purpose. As evident in **2**, Mahama also uses pronouns to establish oneness with the people: It is clear from **2** that Mahama uses pronouns to show solidarity with the people in order to put himself in a positive light. This sense of belongingness is anchored through the pronoun 'we'. This indiscriminate use of pronouns makes it difficult to detect what position he is coming from when he speaks. His use of pronouns is undoubtedly persuasive and deceptive. In **extracts 1 and 2** above, the pronoun 'I' has been used to express personal feelings, personal responsibility and self-reference. Again, the pronouns 'we', 'us' and 'our' have been used to create a shared sense of responsibility and duty, and group solidarity. This use of the pronoun by Mahama accords with Sharndama's (2015) thinking that the pronoun 'we' is used as a communicative tool to show that the speaker and the audience belong to the same line, have the same mission/objective, and that it also shows solidarity.

It is important to point out that Mahama uses 'I' for ideological reasons, Mahama sometimes uses it to show power as a means of controlling the mind of his audience. An example can be seen below:

- 3. I am profoundly grateful to the almighty God and the people of Ghana for the opportunity to serve in the high office of president (JDM01).

It is important to point out that the use of 'I' by Mahama can be seen in three ways. It functions as the government, an individual and as an autobiographical representative and all these realisations are made in positive lights. In **3** for example, Mahama presents himself in an institutional capacity through the use of the pronoun 'I'. He presents himself as a leader who has been elected into office through fate. He chooses the verb 'serve' to show that his coming into office is anchored on God. That is, it is nature that influences the events of the country's leadership mandate and not his strength. By painting this picture, Mahama is by implication persuading his audience to see him as a president who has come into power not by his might but by God's power. This characterisation paints him as a powerful President and that his leadership is by divine order. The truth is that looking at how he comes into office, one is likely to share in his ideology. Again, this downplays the real politicking that is involved in power transitions in Ghana by projecting himself as someone who 'power' has come to on its own.

Mahama sometimes uses the pronoun 'I' to project himself as a typical politician who has political ambition and priorities. He presents himself as a presidential candidate who is *seeking political support*. *In all these he puts himself in a positive light*. Example **4** shows this:

- 4. Vote for John Dramani Mahama; obviously John Dramani Mahama and NDC's Better Ghana Agenda. I'll work to unite a divided country that is increasingly losing faith in the political elite and is beginning to question the significance of multi-party democracy that focuses less on lifting us as a people than lifting themselves up as individuals and celebrities (JDM02)

It is clear from **4** that President Mahama uses the pronoun 'I' to refer to himself as a typical politician who needs political power from his people. His priorities are clear in **4** as he hopes to change the political status quo.

3.2. Evidentiality

President Mahama is able to employ evidentiality in the form of figures, statistics, analogy, stories etc. in his speeches for ideological reasons. First, he is able to create stories to bring back memories in order to persuade people and makes his message believable and creditable. The essence of evidentiality is to show the truthfulness and validity of a source of message (Palmer, 1986). Palmer notes that evidentiality shows the power that the speaker has over whatever he says as true or false. Thus, the use of Evidentiality shows the authority of the speaker over his audience as regards the topic under discussion. John Mahama, for example, is able to refer to his past life to the audience to make them believe that he can make a difference in their lives. The purpose is to develop a somewhat permanent balance, with the speaker above and the audience at the lower end.

John Mahama dwells heavily on evidentiality in his speeches to give force to his message. He does that to prove to his audience the validity of his message. For example, Mahama takes advantage of figures and statistics to demonstrate that he knows the state of the country's development. He does that to paint a good picture of the country during his time in order to put himself in a positive light and the NPP in a negative light. An example is demonstrated below:

- 5 Ladies and gentlemen, over the past four years these improvements in medical equipment coupled with human resource development, relevant legislation and increased government financial commitment have ensured a healthy nation as captured by the 2009 to 2012 annual report of the Ghana Health Service. Percentage of delivery supervised by health workers has increased from 2008, 41.7% to 52.2%. Incidence of guinea worm in 2008 reduced from 501 to zero in 2010. Number of functioning CHIPS Compounds increased from 409 in 2008 to 1,675 in 2010 (JDM02).

It is obvious from **5** that Mahama gives clear evidence to show that he and his party members have been better managers of the Ghanaian economy. He catalogues the progress that the country has made under his party. Mahama compares his achievements to those of the NPP in 2008 under the leadership of John Agyekum Kufuor and shows that his party, NDC, has done tremendously well. In fact, the evidence given above put Mahama and his party in a positive light and discredits the political image of the New Patriotic Party. Ideologically, Mahama is creating the impression that he and his party are superior to the NPP in terms of political leadership and governance. The truth is that by making reference to the annual report of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Mahama attaches an air of authenticity and accuracy to his figures. The implication is that since the audience are most likely to accept the position of the Ghana Health Service as genuine, Mahama earns his audience his respect as a truthful, hardworking and caring person. Against this background, it makes sense to say that the ideologically motivated strategy of Mahama begins to yield results. Mahama's reference to the

figures is thus purposed to favour his political interest regarding quality health. Language is therefore used as a means of persuading, influencing and sustaining power. This kind of evidentiality is what Palmer (1986) describes as 'quotative evidential'. For Palmer, this kind of evidentiality signals that someone else is the source of the statement made. In 5, it is the report of GHS that Mahama refers to. The credibility which the GHS has is thus attached to the speech of Mahama, making him win the trust of the people

Moreover, in some circumstances, Mahama relies on what Palmer (1986) describes as visual evidential to create a miserable state of his country and to show his commitment to eliminating such problems from society. These kinds of evidential signals that the speaker's evidence for the truth of his or her statement are derived from the speaker's own sight. In other words, the speaker proves that he himself has firsthand information and that he knows very well what he is talking about. This means that Mahama proves that he has seen the evidence himself. This gives Mahama more authenticity in terms of the information he share with his audience. In the extract below, Mahama persuades the people to see him as someone who *identifies problems and solves them. This is demonstrated here:*

- 6. We have committed to MDG2 which aims at attaining primary education by 2015. Ladies and gentlemen, as I speak with you tonight 18.3 percent of children who should be in primary school are not in school, 53.9 percent of children who should be in junior high school are not in school. The existing infrastructure, 8,557 junior high schools cannot absorb the P6 pupils coming from 14,360 schools. As a social democratic party we believe that education is a right and that there must be equity in terms of access and quality education for all. Therefore by 2016, we intend to ensure that basic education is completely free for all, as the constitution mandates us (JDM02).

As can be seen from 6, Mahama creates a poor image of the country's educational system. He gives clear figures to show the poor state of basic education in his country. Mahama moves further to show his commitment to solving these educational challenges in the country. This finding accords with Djabetey's (2013) revelation that Mahama uses evidentiality to create scenarios of hopelessness and pledges his support to restoring hope in the lives of his audience. This puts Mahama in a positive light as a leader who does not just talk about problems but goes further to solve them. Ideologically, Mahama is neutrally appealing to his audience the fact that he is committed to the country's progress and that he has the lives of his audience at heart. Here, Mahama projects himself as the restorer of the country's educational problems. This enables him to be seen in the eyes of his audience as the best leader for the county. He is also made to appear superior in the view of the audience.

Sometimes Mahama uses evidentiality for purely political reasons. He uses this ideological discursive tool to account to his audience what has happened during his political leadership. In the 2016 State of the Nation Address, Mahama resorts to the use of evidentiality to account to his people how he has affected lives through his political policies and programs. He uses visual evidential to show the level of truthfulness and validity of his message. He reports from his own point of view. This can be seen below:

- 7. It is because of this programme that 16-year-old Apim Shulamite is now the Assistant School Prefect of the Atta Mills Community Day School in Otuam. After completing JHS, Apim, who once dreamt of becoming a nurse, had to stay home for a year due to lack of access to a secondary school. Apim's parents are settlers from Somanya. Her father is a taxi driver and her mother sells second-hand clothing. During the year that she stayed at home, Apim sold waakye and worked in a chop bar. Because of the Community Day Schools intervention, students like Apim are able to go from limited prospects to the fulfilment of personal dreams that ultimately benefit the entire nation (JDM04).

From extract 7 above, it is clear that Mahama has dwelt on evidentiality to paint a picture of the poor state of some individuals in the country. He singles out Apim and shows how destitute she is. The fact that Apim's father is a taxi driver coupled with the fact that his mother sells 'second-hand clothing' reveals the miserable condition of Apim. Again, Apim is presented to us as a young girl who has to abandon school and work as a 'Waakye seller in a chop bar'. This proves that Apim comes from a poor background. Ideologically, Mahama is appealing to the emotions of his audience. The situation of Apim is not a pleasant one and so for Mahama to rescue her from this miserable state automatically makes the audience see Mahama as a caring and hardworking leader. He does not just talk about the problem; he solves them. This also has power relations. The point is that it takes Mahama, the socially superior to rescue Apim, the socially inferior who cannot survive without Mahama.

Again, Mahama sometimes uses stories as a means to create an image of hopelessness and puts himself up as the restorer. He does that to show his desire for the presidency. Mahama does this to make the citizens reexamine

themselves so as to communicate silently to others to reconsider their situation and vote for him. This can also be seen below:

- 8. In November of last year, I inaugurated the main campus of the University for Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) at Ho, which, in just three years of its establishment, has achieved many remarkable success stories. So far more than 2,300 students have been enrolled. Associated with the enrolment is also the creation of 816 direct jobs for teaching and nonteaching staff of UHAS. But those are just numbers. Let me tell you about one of those 2,300 students: Dzidzor Kwamuar from Fodome-Helu. She lost her mum when she was 10 years old. When she counted herself along with her 13 siblings, those being her father's children, there didn't seem to be any hope of standing out. Thankfully, an uncle took care of her through JHS and SHS. She was admitted to Aburi Girls and completed her studies there in 2014 only to find that despite being qualified, she could not attend medical school due to inadequate access. Now, with the opening of the University for Health and Allied Sciences, Dzidzor is indeed standing out. This access has made a tremendous difference in her life, and it will also make a difference in the lives of Dzidzor's future patients (JDM04).

As we can see from 8, it is clear that Mahama creates scenarios to show the hopelessness in the country and projects himself as the Messiah of the people. In this story, the miserable state of Dzidzor Kwamuar has been laid bare to appeal to the emotions of the people. Ideologically, Mahama creates a brand effect for himself as a caring leader who listens to his people and does not just let their concerns evaporate into thin air but follows up on them with attempts to seeing them solved. As evident in 8, Mahama has solved the problem of Dzidzor. This makes Mahama to be thought of as a selfless, caring and a benevolent President. The kind of evidentiality used here is a kind of accounting to the people; it is also a nice way of telling the people to continue to give their support to him.

3.3. Intertextuality as an ideological discursive tool

According Fairclough (1992b), intertextuality refers to the condition whereby all communicative events draw on earlier events. In this study, Mahama relies on intertextuality to project his ideologies.

Manifest Intertextuality

Fairclough (1992) indicates that manifest intertextuality is a pronounced form of intertextuality whereby texts explicitly draw on other texts, for instance, by citing them. Presidents Mahama resorts to this use of intertextuality as a means of persuading the people when the need arises. Using intertextuality in a harmonious way obliges his interlocutors to adopt his point of view. Intertextuality becomes an ideological discursive strategy in which a superior voice is invoked so that the audience listen to the speakers. Mahama instills confidence in his people by referring to Nelson Mandela's speech as we can see in 9. In this case, the respect which the audience have for Nelson Mandela is attached to what Mahama says, making what he says achieve its intended effect. This can be seen below:

- 9. Nelson Mandela once said, 'It always seems impossible until it is done'. I believe that with God and in Ghana, all things are possible (JDM03)

As can be seen from 9, Mahama speaks through Nelson Mandela to build confidence in his people. The people know the story of Nelson Mandela as a man of great confidence so quoting him helps Mahama achieve his aim of inspiring hope in his people. Thus, Mahama uses intertextuality to show power relations between them and their people.

3.4. Historical Allusion

One other form of intertextuality as a discursive strategy that is found in the speeches of John Mahama is historical allusion. President Mahama relies on this ideological tool to show that he has knowledge of the past history of his country and continents. In the case of John Mahama, he projects himself as a historian who has great knowledge of the political history of Ghana. He knows when to recollect past historical incidents for his personal use. His undergraduate degree in History might have had an influence in the way he applies this tool in his political endeavour. But then politics itself demands historical knowledge and any successful politician must be a good historian of the political, social, economic, religious, cultural etc. of the life of his country. In Mahama's attempt to inform his electorate that their participation in political processes will lead to the overall developmental progress of Ghana, he makes use of historical allusion by cataloguing people whose personal contributions have put Ghana on the threshold of progress in one way or the other. This can be seen in 10:

- 10. The names of our forefathers and foremothers are firmly etched in the world's memory, people like Naa Yaa Asantewaa, Naa Gbewa, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and Dr. J. B Danquah. People like Efua Sutherland, Dr. James

Kwegyir Aggrey Dr. Esther Efua Ocloo and Dr. Ephraim Koku Amu. These are but a few of the names of people who were fearless enough to fulfil their dreams or to fight for the liberation of their people, or to envision change and then manifest it (JDM03).

Example **10** depicts Mahama as a leader who readily extols the singular contributions of earlier leaders to the progress of Ghana. By mentioning Nana Yaa Asantewaa, he makes a clear flashback to Asante's history involving the warrior lady who led her people to fight the White people. The mention of Kwame Nkrumah and Dr. J. B. Danquah brings to mind the fight for independence. What he seeks to achieve is to appeal to all Ghanaians to come together to continue the good work of ensuring the progress of Ghana. Mahama does this well in the following lines:

- 11. We respectfully extol their virtues and hold them in high esteem. In fact, we hold them in such high esteem that we often overlook entirely the reality that these heroes, these men and women were as humans as you and I. They were not so different from most Ghanaians, like those assembled here or those going about the events of their day in the homes, churches, mosques and offices across the country (JDM03).

Example **11** evidently paints Mahama as a leader who is able to inspire confidence and trust in his people through drawing upon examples from historical personages. He makes his people know that the forefathers are not any better or supernatural people. They are just as human as they are. This is a clever way of informing the citizens that just as they (the historical figures) were able to achieve something great for Ghana so will he be able to. He makes this clear when he indicates that the past leaders were as human as 'you and I'. Mahama is by implication deploying these personal pronouns as a manipulative strategy to sway the minds of the citizens towards him as an ordinary person like the citizens but with a great mind to transform the nation. So he appears to be saying that everybody is capable of doing something for their country. But while it is true that everybody can, the truth holds that he is the one in charge of the baton now. Thus, Mahama seems to convince the people to think that he is just like they are. But the question is to what extent is Mahama just like every Ghanaian? Aren't there no differences? Why does he call them ordinary citizens? Clearly, Mahama employs this discursive ideological tool to persuade the citizens in order to win their support. What president Mahama does here is to create a common ground where it appears he and the citizens are the same. But this is only a strategy to persuade and have the people (citizens) listen to his proposal. Example **11** suggests that president Mahama employs this tool of association for two main reasons. First, he is able to establish a mutual link between him and his audience through the identification of the joint/common experience he shares with the people. For example, as can be seen in **11**, he shows that he and the citizens are both human beings and that they both come from a common ancestor. The second function of establishing this common ground is to help him come on with controversial issues which do not engage the audiences' immediate attention. Mahama has clearly informed the citizens how important they are to the development of Ghana. He silently states that Ghana's development will be met not by presidents per se but by the love, contribution and dedication of the ordinary Ghanaian, whom he associates himself with. This is evident in the words below:

- 12. They were ordinary people who lived their lives to the fullest, made use of their God-given talent and took pride in their activities. That was the simple call they answered, the call that placed them in extraordinary circumstances, events and experiences that indelibly change the face and the very fabric of this nation (JDM03).

It is clear from **11** that power can be disguised by people; first, the presidents can disguise their present status and try to place themselves on the same pedestal with the people they govern (citizens) (Lawan, 2016). Again, power is disguised in the way language has been employed to establish a common ground between the president and his audience. This rhetorical strategy has been meaningfully employed in **11** and **12** by Mahama because the main intention of politician is to convince their audience in order for the audience to support them (Beard, 2004). And that is why they pretend (by way of presenting themselves) to be seen as ordinary citizens, as we see in **12**. He has deceived the people in this regard.

Mahama is able to use historical allusion to bring out very serious significant messages. For example, in his inaugural speech, he appeals to the people to give in their best through the use of historical allusion. This can be seen in the extract below:

- **13.** Mention the name Tetteh Quarshie, for instance, and you will learn the story of an ordinary man, a blacksmith, the son of a farmer from Teshie. In 1870, Tetteh Quarshie travelled to Fernando Po, an island that belongs to the nation of Equatorial Guinea and is now called Bioko. At the end of that fateful trip, Tetteh Quarshie returned home with several cocoa seeds. He planted those seeds on his property in Mampong-Akwapim to see if they would grow. So well suited was this crop to the soil and climate that it grew abundantly. It took less than twelve years for the country to start exporting cocoa. Now, over one hundred years later, Ghana

is the world's second largest exporter of cocoa, and is Ghana's leading export earner. This is the effect that the life of one ordinary citizen can have on an entire nation (JDM03).

In **13** above, Mahama takes us far back to the 1800's to tell us the story of Tetteh Quarshie. He gives us clearly the story that leads to the production of cocoa in Ghana. He shows the singular contribution of Tetteh Quarshie to the people of his time and of the current age. Here, Mahama presents himself as someone who has known both the political and the economic/agricultural history of his country. By doing this also, he recognises the contribution of Tetteh Quarshie to the growth of the Ghanaian economy. But at the heart of this historical antecedent lies a personal ideological stance- he takes advantage to appeal to all Ghanaians to come together to contribute their quota for the development of the nation. No wonder that he ends the allusion with 'this is the effect that the life of one ordinary citizen can have an entire nation'. This quotation clearly reveals that Mahama believes that it is the handwork of the ordinary citizens that promotes the nation and not necessarily the elites. And that is why he associates himself with the commoners so that he can have their trust and support. The use of allusion then makes him raise very serious issues without the people realising them. The extract above is not just a historical narrative; it is loaded with direct messages to the people to appeal to their conscience to help in the growth of the country.

Presidents use allusion as a means of influencing the opinions of their people. In the extract below, Mahama also takes a mental journey. He does that to refer to the past historical life of the NPP to paint a bad image of the party. This can be seen in the extract below:

- 14. When the NDC came into power there were as many 4,300 schools under trees. We've reduced that number by 1,700; and that's eliminating 40 percent of such schools (JDM02)

From example **14**, Mahama makes reference to the past to show the achievements of the NDC party. This is to make the citizens reexamine themselves and to see him and his party as the best and vote for him. The adverbial particle 'when' communicates that the time of reporting is in the present while the actual happening is in the past. The above extracts show that Nkrumah's and Mahama's deployment of historical allusion in their speeches helps to foster their inclinations, remind their audience of their political history and also cautions the ruling party to know where they have come from. But Mahama further uses it to glorify the past deeds of his political party in order to put his party in a positive light as evident in **12**. It is therefore through historical allusion that Mahama projects the ideology of positive self-representation and negative other representation.

3.5. Agency as an ideological discursive tool

One other discursive strategy that sets Mahama in his speech is his creative use of agency. An agent is the doer or the performer of an action. In many cases, there are causal agents of incidents and events but sometimes Mahama removes these agents of actions. Mahama excludes the particular actors under whose watch and mandate these developmental projects are to be undertaken (by someone). This is so because considering the current (context) political terrain, he is the one in charge of the developmental projects he mentions here:

- 15. More jobs must be created. More roads, bridges, schools and hospitals must be built. The infrastructure that we already have must be expanded, strengthened, and made better able to with stand the increased usage (JDM03).

From number **15**, it is clear that Mahama makes the sentences agentless to avoid making the citizens realise immediately who should be the agents. The creator of the jobs are not mentioned. Also, he intentionally eliminates the agents or those who should supervise the provision of the social amenities like roads, bridges, schools and hospitals he mentions in the extract above. In fact, one of the functions of government is to provide infrastructure for the people. It is therefore important for Mahama to have indicated that the government must provide those infrastructural developments. Clearly, he does not want to commit himself to be taken on. Similarly, he resorts to the passive voice to remove the agent of the sentence 'The infrastructure that we have must be expanded, strengthened, and made better able to withstand the increased usage'. He really succeeds in doing this through the use of the passive construction which turns the sentence into an event with several occurrences. He emphasises rather the occurrences (verbs) in order to catch the attention of his audience. This will make the audience think more about the occurrences and lose sight of the real actors of the actions. The reason behind this is to avoid taking on responsibilities for which he will be held accountable. That is why he strategically chooses to avoid the agent which provides the participants but praises the action. In the extract above, the citizens are made to think about the attempt 'create', 'build', 'expand', 'strengthen' and 'make better' and not the actors who are to ensure that these things are done.

In a similar vein, Mahama employs the agentless constructions to direct his audience's attention to the kind of reforms that must be done in our institutions and implemented. This is captured below:

- 16. Equipment should not be the only thing that is state-of-the-art in our institutions; systems, procedures and staff must be brought up to standard; best practices must be implemented (JDM03)

In number **16**, president Mahama points out the need for certain developmental tools but dissociates himself from their implementation. The equipment that should not only be 'state of the art' has no agent. The 'systems', 'procedures' and 'staff' who must be brought up to standard are agentless. Again, the best practices that must be implemented have no agent. Generally, we expect in such agency constructions, animate subjects who point out the relationship between causality and responsibility. But this is not so with Mahama. This shows that his interest lies mainly with raising the awareness of the citizens towards the things that need to be done and not a personal commitment to make them happen under his watch.

Another passive construction is used in the preceding paragraph of the inaugural speech. It has no agent just as has been discussed. Obviously, the repetition of this discursive strategy is not just coincidental. These cases remind one of Fairclough (2001) when he talks about the mystification or cloudiness of agency and causality, that is, obfuscation of agency and causality. This style of presentation is ideologically motivated. The unnamed doer of the action may be someone who is not credible or recognised by the audience and that may be the reason why he omits it. Citizens will hold him accountable should he commit himself or say anything unconvincing. Sometimes, the agentless is sued as a mark of humility. Having served in the Mills' government as the vice president and ultimately as the president during Mill's untimely death, he has every reason to take credit for success that come during that time. But he excuses himself and of any other person credited with the development and remains silent on them (the developments) and allows the citizens to decide for themselves who deserves that honour. Let examine extract **17**:

- 17. Ghana is on the cusp of enormous transformation. We are moving forward at a rapid pace. New resources are at our disposal; new alliances are being formed. The opportunities posed by these gains could result in a self-sufficiency that was always imagined, but was never a realistic occurrence in the foreseeable future, not in the way it is right now (JDM02).

It is seen from **17** that a tremendous change or progress has happened in the life of Ghana. Clearly, this progress has taken place at the time of the NDC government so president Mahama could have made that clear. But he does not. However, a critical look at the construction above shows that Mahama is implicitly praising himself and his government. The last part of the construction reveals that the developmental interventions which sought to make Ghana self-sufficient remained a dream until his time 'the way it is right now'. This implies that beneath the surface deletion of the agents of the sentence above are implied agents. He does this so that readers will not immediately recognise that he is praising himself. He is only identified as a humble leader who never boasts of his achievements. But at the heart of this discursive strategy lies the ideological motive of praising himself.

- 18. Our infrastructure development will be intensified to catalyse and accelerate the transformation of Ghana. Our governance will be more thoroughly decentralized to enable citizens to access resources and demand accountability for services. Our private sector and facilitation programs will complement those of the public sector in our quest for accelerated growth and job creation. Our industrial development, notably in the energy sector will be the basis for pursuing a value-added, diversified and productive economy. Our agriculture will be modernised to involve strong partnership between private agriculture investors and small holder peasant farmers in a manner that introduces capital, technology and expanded local and global market access. Our educational assets will be rapidly expanded to provide suitable access for every child to enter and complete basic education and progress to secondary education (JDM02).

It is obvious from **18** that president Mahama puts emphasis on the verbs and removes the agents who operate the actions. Ideologically, President Mahama does not want to be seen as projecting himself. He chooses to remove the agent so that the citizens will see him not to be bragging but as humble.

3.6. War metaphor

One of the metaphors that is foregrounded in the speeches of Mahama is war metaphor. The idea that politics is war appears to be stuck in the minds of the people and so he capitalises on that to reflect his views on what politics is. It is an undeniable fact that in Ghana, politics is a blatant war game so people come into it with the idea to fight for political

power. In the case of president Mahama, he relies on war metaphor to show that politics is indeed a war and one must see it as such. Let us examine the extract below:

- 19. Every election is a hard fought battle and this was no exception. For those of us who chose to be contenders and go into electoral contests, we go about it as a win-lose proposition (JDM01)

As we can see from **19**, Mahama has clearly shown how he conceives politics. To him, election can be talked about (understood) in terms of war. He shows that presidential election is a form of war and politicians must go into it as they do war. The reason is that during those periods, all presidential candidates try all means possible to fight for the position of president. The extract above, for example, is full of words from the field of war. Lexical items such as 'battle', 'fought', 'contenders', 'contests', 'win' and 'lose' communicate the fact that Mahama talks and thinks about election as war. Elections become a battle field and the candidates become the protagonists who are to fight for the position. This position shows how tense and fierce elections are in the Ghanaian political landscape. Words are therefore the weapons that are used in the battle field of elections. In his concession speech, Mahama is able to make readers understand that the just ended election was a battle and that he has lost. This is portrayed in the expression 'we go about it as a win-lose proposition'. Admittedly, he sees elections as a win-lose game and one must accept the outcome. This is the same in war. Ideologically, Mahama is trying to convince his listeners to understand that he is not surprised about the outcome for he went into the elections with the idea of win-lose.

This creative use of metaphor is also found in the speeches of Mahama as shown in the extract below:

- 20. Corruption... is the number one enemy to the progress and development of our country and one of the biggest threats to our peace and security. It is, therefore, incumbent on all of us to galvanise our efforts in order to eradicate corruption in the country (JDM05)

In **20**, Mahama makes Ghanaians raise their tempers against corruption, for he notes that it is the major challenge facing his government and the people. He makes the audience conceive the idea that their ability to fight corruption will result in the improvement in the life of the people and the country in general for the people to understand the negative impact of corruption so he brings up this idea of war which is more concrete, so that the people will understand what he is talking about. The people are therefore the fighters while corruption is the enemy. Mahama therefore becomes a leader who is able to climb down to the level of everybody, including the ordinary citizen, so that they can understand whatever he says.

3.7. Religious Metaphor/Biblical Allusion as an ideological discursive tool

One other metaphor that is foregrounded in the selected speeches of Mahama is religious metaphor. Mahama's recurrent use of Biblical language is presumably intended to achieve some ideological aim. First, the religious metaphor he uses shows that Ghana is a religious society and that many or almost every Ghanaian believes in God. He also seeks to suggest that it is God who controls everything in the country, including politics in Ghana. Again, his use of religious metaphor helps him to project his religious inclinations. Let us study the extract below:

- 21. Most importantly, I am grateful to the almighty God who has sustained us through the implementation of the Agenda for Transformation. I am eternally grateful (JDM01)

From **21**, it becomes clear that Mahama uses religious metaphor to project a certain religious personality for himself in the political thinking of his listeners. First, he projects himself as one leader who respects and acknowledges the power of God in the life of man. He invokes the Biblical belief that God has power over everything. He makes it clear that God sustains of everybody and everything in the world. He believes that, his reign as president was successful and possible because of God's intervention. His recognition of God in his leadership is ideologically motivated. This projects him as a leader who relies not on his strength but rather relies on God for strength and wisdom. The implication is that he is convincing the people to believe that he relies on God for any accomplishments and achievements in his political career. In extract **21** for example, President Mahama shows that it is God's power that gives him the ability to implement the Agenda for transformation which was his political message. Here, Mahama presents himself as a leader who recognises his maker and also pleases him. He presents himself as someone who fears God and consults him in all things. By doing this, he is influencing on his readers to see him as a religious leader who does things through God's power. Nkrumah is also found doing the same thing in **21**. In the following extract, President Mahama reveals God as a king maker.

- 22. I am profoundly grateful to the almighty God and the people of Ghana for the opportunity to serve in the high office of president (JDM01).

In 22, Mahama clearly explains politics in terms of religion, coming as he does from the Christian religious background, Mahama projects God's role in politics just as in Christianity. Christians believe that it is God who calls men to lead his people as pastors, evangelists, teachers, apostles etc. The implication is that just as God chooses people to serve his people in church so does he in politics. It is this background knowledge that makes president Mahama express his acknowledgement, first to God for the opportunity to serve. The word 'serve' is Biblical in nature and it reveals president Mahama's religious faith in God as the creator of a leader. The Christian tradition teaches that leaders are to serve and not to be served. For example, Christians believe that Jesus Christ was brought into the world to serve mankind. By using the word 'serve', President Mahama is presenting himself as the Messiah (Jesus Christ) who serves his people. This projects him as a humble and respectable leader, but it, at the same time makes, him powerful over his audience.

Again, the speaker implies that his ascension to the throne of presidency is an act of God. He therefore sees himself as God's most representative who has been asked to serve his people. No wonder that instead of thanking his party and campaign team, he thanks God first 'I am grateful to the almighty God and the people of Ghana....in the high office of president'. This shows that Mahama's reign is endorsed by God first, and made manifest by men. Ideologically, Mahama is making the people see him as leader who is approved by God. The citizens then become people God has entrusted in his hands. This projects him as a powerful leader, and separates him from his listeners. There is asymmetrical power relations here. It is therefore not surprising that Mahama invokes God's blessing on his citizens in 23:

- 23. *May God bless you all, and may He God continue to bless our homeland, Ghana (JDM03).*

In 23, President Mahama states his belief in God as the owner of blessings. He therefore chooses to present himself in the image of a pastor and prays for his citizens and country. This projects Mahama as a leader who loves his people and country. He puts himself in a positive light as a leader who thinks positively for his people. Ideologically, Mahama is influencing the minds of his citizens to see him in a positive light in order to win their support. Mahama knows that Ghanaians are religious and therefore the use of religious metaphor will help him win the heart and minds of the citizens.

Sometimes, President Mahama poses himself as preachers through religious metaphor and deliver some very important messages to the citizens. In the extract below, Mahama talks about *the need for unity*.

- 24. So I **pray** that as we move forward, even as we voice our differences and possibly even disagree on agendas and decisions and other details of governance, we always keep in mind the fact of our shared destiny and the undeniable fact of possibilities of power that exist in our unity. (JDM01).

As can be seen from 24, President Mahama assumes the position of a preacher and prays for the citizenry. He uses the word 'pray' in 'so I pray...' to present himself as a messenger of God. Clearly, this kind of prayer is loaded with important message. He advises that the citizens should be united in all circumstances. He maintains that disagreement is part of life and politics but that should not divide the citizens. For him to be praying for this sense of unity for his people, Mahama places himself above his citizens. Having been endorsed by God, he sees himself as being closer to God and worthy of intervening for his citizens. Even though Mahama is very assertive in his message, he is able to conceal under the cover of religion. He orders the people in a subtle way through the word 'pray' and the pronominal selections 'we' and 'our' He establishes common ground with the people by identifying himself with them. But the truth is that Mahama is merely concealing the explicit order that is in the message. Ideologically, Mahama is presenting himself as a humble leader, and as a unifier. He is once again profiling his identity. The extract is a proof of Mahama's religious fervour and assumed humble nature.

Ideologically, the use of religious metaphors gives spiritual credence and authority to the speeches of Mahama. He knows that Ghanaians are religious and that is why he alludes to their shared religious beliefs to compel the audience to support him and vote for him. Mahama reveals himself as powerful through the ideological representation of superiority based on the dependence of the almighty God. This confirms Nkechi's (2015) idea that 'religious metaphors are used by politicians to invoke religious sensibilities to project images especially the God factor as supreme determiner of all things to show that no one can challenge what God says' (p. 143) and ultimately what they also say. This shows that religious allusions and metaphors were used as discursive strategies to manifest power difference between Mahama and his audience. Mahama further uses the religious allusions and metaphors to project an ideology of hope in his audience. Again, the religious metaphors reveal his religious beliefs.

3.8. Solidarity Metaphors as an ideological discursive strategy

One noticeable discursive strategy in the speeches of John Mahama is the way he shows commonality/associations with the citizens. Ideologically, he project this association through an emotionally charged relationships with the citizens in

order to have the sympathy, love, trust and confidence of the people. In **25**, Mahama and Nkrumah develop a close relationship with the citizens through the use of family metaphors in order to have the support of the people. In the extract below, this is how they address their people.

- 25. My fellow countrymen and women Family and friends, Good morning (JDM01)

As we can see from **25**, Mahama addresses the people in a way that establishes a common ground between him and the citizens. The words 'fellow', 'family' and 'friends' connect him and the people as one. Ideologically, Mahama is influencing the minds of the people (from the onset) to see him as their own. He creates a common brand between him and the people. Mahama does it better in the following extract.

- 26. Just imagine what we can achieve if we stand together as one people with one nation and one common destiny (JDM02)

In **26**, president Mahama invokes in the people the idea of team spirit. Like family, they are to remain united. Ideologically, this metaphor positions the people and president Mahama as coming from one common ancestry. President Mahama presents his political regime as one that is natural. Once this is done, the nation is represented not only as a natural community but also, like a family. The people are thus influenced to give him their support for they all (he and the people) are members of the same family, blood line – the people can even inherit him. He poses himself in a manner to suggest that the seat of the presidency is for him and the citizens. Let see how he does that here:

- 27. There is a torch that is passed from one era of Ghanaians to the next. It is as fragile and as irreplaceable as any family treasure. My fellow countrymen and women, that torch is now in our possession (JDM03)

From **27**, Mahama presents the position of presidency (government) as a family property that must be safeguarded by members of the family. He presents his government as one that belongs to all when he says 'That torch is now in our possession'. Words such as 'family' and 'fellow' exhibit the sense of unity that exists between them. Ideologically Mahama is influencing the minds of the people to see him as one of them. He does not want to be regarded as someone different from the citizens. Mahama is thus by implication persuading the people to join and support him to safeguard the seat of the presidency (for it is a family most important property).

Another discursive strategy of showing solidarity is the use of the metaphor of patriotism or love for one's country. This, is done for two main reasons. First, to project the image of Ghana, and secondly to establish a common ground with the people in order to influence their actions. In doing so, they manipulate the minds of the people. Mahama takes advantage of this kind of metaphor to appeal to the conscience of the people in the following extract:

- 28. My fellow countrymen and women, that torch is now in our possession. That torch is the tradition of optimism and hope that we must carry on. It is the responsibility that we have to take charge of our lives, and in so doing to determine the course of Ghana's future. We are now keepers of.... less fortunate (JDM03)

In **28**, Mahama appeals to the minds of the citizens to fight for the common good of Ghana. He inculcates in the people love for their country. He does that by projecting their identity as Ghanaians. Mahama intentionally removes the real politicking in the Ghanaian political landscape where people speaks to their party members and address the people as Ghanaians. Ideologically, Mahama is influencing the minds of the people to see him as part of them as they all contribute to the total development of the country and not the NDC party. Here, Mahama speaks as a father of a nation and not as a party leader. This ideology is further projected here:

- 29. We all, each and every one of us, have a role to play in the growth and development of our beloved mother Ghana. In our hands – yours as well as mine – rests the success or failure of Ghana's future (JDM03)

As it can be observed from **29**, both President Mahama creates common ground with the people in order to appeal to their conscience. For example in extract **29**, Mahama projects a sense of oneness through national identity image building. He therefore appeals to the people to remain united in their fight towards the success of Ghana. The pronominal selections of 'we', 'us', 'our' further deepen the sense of commonality that he creates with the people. Ideologically, Mahama is appealing to the citizens for their support in order to fulfill his promises. In the extract below, Mahama further uses metaphor of solidarity to project his sense of patriotism.

- 30 Let us stand, not as separate entities but as partners. Together we will build a Ghana that will be a source of pride for all of us. This is our country. This is our moment; Ghana's time, once again, for greatness (JDM03)

Example 30 is full of nationalistic sentiment. Mahama instils in the people a national self-image. He does that by appealing to the people to come together to build a Ghana that will be a source of pride for all: President Mahama knows that the matter of identity is such a crucial thing to all Ghanaians, so he takes advantage of that to influence his people to support him. Ideologically, what president Mahama seeks to say is that he is more Ghanaian than a politician. Again, he projects himself as a leader who loves his country and is ready to die for his country. Furthermore, 30 portrays president Mahama as a leader who feels proud of his identity as a Ghanaian. By establishing a common relationship with the people, he is influencing the citizens to see him as humble.

President Mahama further relies on solidarity metaphors to instill confidence and hope in his people. Let us see how he does this in the extract below:

- 31. It is true that other countries have meet adversity while trying to make the most of prospects such as the ones we have before us. But those countries are not Ghana. They do not have the benefit of our history or the examples of our heroes. We have been the first before the success story. We have blazed trails before for others to follow (JDM03)

As we can see from 31, President Mahama is building confidence and a sense of optimism in the minds of the citizens. Here, he projects himself as a father who knows how to comfort his children in times of need (trouble). He does this by projecting his country over and above other countries. For example, Ghana's lead in the independence of Africa is echoed in 'we have been the first before' and. 'We have blazed trails for others to follow'.

Another strategy of using solidarity metaphor occurs through what Terrell & Pikalo (2008) call metaphors of friendship. They maintain that this kind of metaphor occurs when politicians portray themselves as friends who are concerned about the welfare of their citizens and not simply for mutual benefits (ibid: 75). They maintain that these friends come together to share an enemy and fight the enemy. They add that this kind of friendship is a 'political friendship' and it happens so because the groups come together to fight for or against a common cause (ibid: 75). In the extract below, Mahama calls on the people to fight against social inequality. He does that by first associating himself with the people. This is evident here:

- 32.We are all a part of one another and we cannot afford to live with policies and promises that will divide us into those who have and those who have not. On December 8th when you pick that ballot paper you would face the clearest choice of any time in a generation. A choice between two distinctly different parts for Ghana, a choice between giving more and more to the haves in the hope that it would somehow someday trickle down to the have-not and also a choice that is based on equity and opportunity for all regardless of background, regardless of ethnicity, regardless of religious, political or private affiliation (JDM02).

In example 32, president Mahama takes advantage of friendship metaphors to project himself as the right candidate. He uses what Terrell & Pikalo (2008) call the metaphor of social capital to show a distinction between social democracy (socialism) and capitalism which favours the rich in society. Ideologically, Mahama is influencing the minds of the people to endorse socialism which he stands for and reject capitalism which the NPP believes in. He projects socialism in a positive light and discredits capitalism.

3.9. Rhetorical question as an ideological strategy

Rhetorical questions are those that do not need direct answers which are implied by what they say. In this study, rhetorical questions are used for ideological projections, to chat a common front between Mahama and his audience, to raise thought provoking issues and to highlight the socio-economic and socio-political desires of the people. As an ideological strategy, the audience are left to provide answers to the questions raised. The objective is to arouse the senses of the people to make decisions for themselves. Examples from the speeches of Mahama include the following:

- 33. Seventy years from now, I wonder what those looking back at this era will think of it, what they will think of us? When they study these days, these events that are shaping our world and our lives, those millions of students, girls and boys, what will our actions or inactions say to them? (JDM05)
- 34. What secrets of statecraft will they learn? And most importantly, what sort of world will the work that we are doing now, the work of peace, produce for them to inherit? It is after all their history that we are holding right now in our hands. We cannot fail them (JDM05)

From examples 33 and 34 above, Mahama cultivates a kind of political behaviour that has the tendency to affect the younger generation. Mahama's sense of anger towards rivalry and disunity is echoed through the recurrent use of the rhetorical question. Again, Mahama's sense of urgency in writing a better political history for the younger generation is evident in 'what secrets of statecraft will they learn?' Thus, Mahama relies on rhetorical questions to project the ideology of positive self-representation and negative other representation.

4. Conclusion

In this study, we have discussed the discursive structures through which Mr. John Dramani Mahama projects his ideologies. The study has shown that language plays a crucial role in political communication as tool to communicate one's intentions. In this study, language has been revealed as a means of communicating ideologies and events of the world. In the tradition of CDA, this study has confirmed that text and talk have social and cultural character and that discourse functions ideologically. It is important to point out that language and politics are inseparable fields. Politics is truly a means by which people impose their wish on others and it is language they rely on to get this accomplished. The study provides much evidence to conclude that politics is a game that can be successfully played through a skillful employment of language. Politicians mask their ideologies in their language in a way that these ideologies will not be immediately noticed by their audience. It is important say that this study has confirmed that CDA is an important theoretical and methodological tool for the study of how discourse functions ideologically, especially, in terms of helping to unearth hidden ideologies in discursive structures. This study confirms Ngula's (2021) findings that Mahama uses [language] in creative and unconventional ways to depict culturally relevant situations, and to convey his political ideologies to his audience. This study ultimately concludes that language is ideologically loaded and that it has social, cultural, religious and political character.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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