

Event Models: A Socio-cognitive Study of Selected Interrogations in 2008 Quasi-judicial Public Hearing on Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Administration in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study carries out a socio-cognitive analysis of 2008 national quasi-judicial public hearing on Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in Nigeria. Video recordings of interrogations between the public hearing panel and complainants/defendants were used as data for the study, which were taken from the 2008 national public hearings on FCT administration in Nigeria. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used in the analysis of the data. Twenty randomly sampled interrogations were recorded and transcribed. The event models of the interactants featured global topics and local semantics, argumentative and rhetorical strategies. These are influenced by protective, suppressive, defensive and restorative ideologies. The study helps in the understanding of public hearing interrogations as it gives one the knowledge of how ideologies can shape linguistic and semantic patterns in a text.

Key words: Critical discourse analysis; Socio-cognitive; Ideologies; Event models; Quasi-judicial Public Hearing

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INTRODUCTION

Political public hearings (quasi-judicial/investigative) in Nigeria are fast becoming an avenue in Nigerian political system used in investigating corruption in different sectors of the country. In 2008, several political public hearings were carried out in different sectors such as FCT administration, power projects, etc. Scholars have reiterated the fact that people who are responsible for eliciting and evaluating testimonies should be trained in critical discourse analysis (see McCormick and Bock, 1999). The study of language in political public hearings is important because it can serve as manipulative tools in narration (see Verdoolaege, 2003) as well as to carry ideological postures (see Lubbe, 2007 and Verdoolaege, 2003). Van Dijk (2002) opines that the relationship between political discourse and political cognition is not usually studied. Thus, there is a need to study the discourses that occur during these hearings as they have effect on the political system in Nigeria.

Very little work has been done on language studies in political public hearings, particularly in the Nigerian context. Most studies on the discourse dwell on the sociological and political aspects of public hearings (see Brasher, 2006; Duffin, 2003; and Headrick, Serra & Twombly, 2002). Most works that exist dwell on the TRC hearings in South Africa (McCormick and Bock (1999), Verdoolaege (2003) and Anthonissen (2006)). Also, the ideologies of these public hearing are different from the ones studied in work as they are reconciliatory in nature. Thus, the nature of political public hearings in Nigeria has not been fully explored and may not be effectively determined from these studies. The aim of the study is to explore the socio-cognitive aspects of the interrogations in the public hearing on FCT administration in Nigeria.

1. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has been described as ‘a type of discourse analytic research’ that ‘studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context, van Dijk (2001:352). CDA aims to offer a different method of theorising and analysing discourse. He points out that critical discourse analysts argue that science and scholarly discourse are essentially part of and influenced by social structure and produced in social interaction. Such relations should be studied and accounted for and scholarly practices should be based on such insights. For critical discourse analysts, theory formation, description and explanation are sociopolitically situated. Thus, discourse analysts conduct research in solidarity and cooperation with dominated groups.

Studies in CDA are multifarious and are derived from different theoretical backgrounds which are oriented towards very different data and methodologies (Weiss and Wodak, (2005:12) as cited in Hart and Lukes, (2007)). For example, Wodak’s approach to CDA is a discourse-historical one as she believes that every discourse is historically situated. Fairclough (2001) approach to CDA is based on the study of semiosis as an irreducible part of material social process. Van Dijk advocates for a socio-cognitive approach as he posits that cognition is the interface between discourse and societal structures. Wodak (2001a) opines that both small qualitative case studies and large data corpora are used and these are drawn from fieldwork and ethnographic research. However, van Dijk (2001) asserts that certain words are common to all scholars of CDA and these include power, dominance, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, race, discrimination, interests, reproduction, institution, social structure and social order amongst others.

1.1 Ideology

Van Dijk (1991) views ideologies as interpretation frameworks which organise sets of attitudes about other elements of the society. They provide the cognitive foundation for the various groups in societies as well as the advancement of their own goals and interests. Van Dijk (1991) opines that there is a schema amongst ideology, society, cognition and discourse. He asserts that social interaction takes place within social structures and is represented in the form of discourse which is ‘cognized’ according to a cognitive system/ memory, which consists of short term memory in which strategic processes or decoding and interpretation takes place. The long term memory hold the socio-cultural knowledge, which consist of knowledge, discourse, communication, persons, groups and events, which exist in the forms of scripts; and social group attitudes. These groups represent an array of ideologies which conform to an individual’s identity, goals, social position, values and resources. Van Dijk (1995a:18) asserts that ‘ideologies act as interface between

the cognitive representations and processes underlying discourse and action, on the one hand, and the societal position and interests of social groups, on the other hand.’ He explains that this forms a link between ‘macrolevel analyses of groups, social formations and social structure, and microlevel studies of situated, individual interaction and discourse.’ He opines that ideologies are acquired gradually by members of a group or culture and they ‘mentally represent the basic social characteristics of a group, such as their identity, tasks, goals, norms, values, position and resources.’ Thus, ideologies helps to allow members of a group to organise their group, coordinate their social actions and goals, protect their resources or gain access to resources of other groups.

1.2 Event Models

Van Dijk (1995a:19) opines that there are models which serve as personal representations of people’s experiences of events, actions or situations people are engaged in or read about. He asserts that

models represents the beliefs (knowledge and opinions) people have about their everyday lives and defines what we usually call people’s experiences. These models are unique and personal and controlled by the biographical experiences of social actors. On the other hand, they are also socially controlled, that is, influenced by the general social cognitions members share with other members of their group.

For him, models control how people speak, act, write or understand the social practices of others. Van Dijk (2001b) posits that there are mental models and context models.

Mental models ‘do not merely represent the facts, but typically represent the facts as people define them’ (van Dijk, 2001b: 17). They represent people’s experiences. Thus they are subjective and may be biased representations of reality. They are the starting point of discourses as people may have an opinion or knowledge about an event which will serve as the basis for the discourse. Apart from representing personal experiences, they feature instantiations of shared social representation. Thus, they may be indirectly influenced by ideologies. ‘Mental models of events may be seen as the basis of the ‘content’ or meaning of discourse’, Van Dijk (2002: 216). Thus, they control the ‘semantic’ aspect of discourse. These semantic aspects include topics, schemata, local semantics, style and rhetoric.

2. THE NATURE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing is a public meeting whose main purpose is to obtain public testimony or comment, Meinig (1998). It may occur as part of a regular or special meeting. It may also be the sole purpose of a special meeting, without considering other matters. Meinig (1998) opines there are two types of public hearings and these are legislative and quasi-judicial public hearings. A legislative public hearing

is meant to obtain public input on legislative decisions on matters of policy. They are less formal than quasi-judicial public hearings. Quasi-judicial public hearings involve legal rights of specific parties and the decisions made as a result of such hearings must be based upon and supported by the 'record' developed at the hearings. The 'record' consists of all testimony or comment presented at the hearing and all documents or exhibits that have been submitted in connection with the matter being handled. All documents, including maps, drawings and staff reports are submitted as numbered exhibits during the public hearing. The hearings are tape-recorded and if a decision is appealed, the court will require a transcript of the hearings, which can be gotten from the tapes, (Meinig, 1998).

2.1 Background to the Public Hearing on FCT Administration in Nigeria

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria, namely Abuja was created in 1976 when it became expedient to have a new seat of government because of the congestion in Lagos, the former FCT. It was carved out of three states, namely Niger, Plateau and Kwara States. A government parastatal, called the Federal Capital Development authority (FCDA) had the responsibility of designing and developing the new territory. From 1979, there was an influx of building contractors, food vendors, entertainers, hoteliers, amongst others. It was not until 1991 that the President of Nigeria moved permanently to Abuja. However, the Master Plan of the territory was not followed as there was poverty, inadequate resources and lack of respect for planning regulations. In 2003, Mallam Nasiru el-Rufai, the twelfth Minister of the FCT was charged with the mandate of transforming Abuja to a Capital city by following the Master plan. This led to demolitions and revocation of titles of lands, (Makinde, 2008).

In March 2008, the Nigerian Senate commissioned one of its committee, led by Senator Abubakar Sodangi, to probe the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) administration from 1999 to 2007. The hearing started on the third of April, 2008 and was held at the Hearing Room of the Senate building. The issues in the public hearing centred on cases of ejection, demolition of properties and revocation of titles of lands and properties in the FCT.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW ON QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ross (2006) considers women's testimonies before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, tracing the complexities of speaking about suffering. She opines that testimonial practices focused on violence's recall which occupies unstable grounds. Arguing that testimony is mediated by the subject positions from which women speak and that these are shaped by cultural

convention, the paper traces the effects of 'modes of discomfort', drawing attention to the faultlines between words and experience when violence is recalled. Bock (2008) explores the use of tense, direct speech and code-switching in two testimonies at the Human Rights Violation Hearings of the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She opines that these are used to express evaluative meanings and position the speakers, the police and their audience in relation to their narratives. She opines that in multilingual contexts, code-switching functions as an appraisal resource.

Verdoolaege (2009) analyses discursive material from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, using Goffman's theories on *participation framework* and *change in footing*. She posits that the testifying victims, the TRC commissioners and the audience engaged in various forms of subordinate communication in addition to the standardised and expected interaction between victims and commissioners.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for this study consists of twenty interrogations between the public hearing panel of the Senate and the complainants/defendants in the 2008 national public hearing on FCT administration in Nigeria. The public hearing on FCT administration was chosen from all the quasi-judicial public hearings based on the fact that the FCT is a microcosm of the entire Nigerian state. It is representative of all the people from all the geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Using the random sampling method, twenty interrogations were selected for the study. This is based on the resources available to the researcher. The subjects for the study include the members of the hearing committee set up by the senate and complainants/defendants. The hearing committee is made up of senators. These senators also represent the different geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The hearing was held at the Hearing Room of the Senate building. The data for this study are collected from video recordings of 2008 national political public hearings in Nigeria. The data are collected from the African Independent Television (AIT), Alagbado, Lagos.

5. EVENT MODELS IN THE PUBLIC HEARING

Event models may be seen as the basis of the 'content' or 'meaning of discourse', Van Dijk (2002: 216). Thus, they control the 'semantic' aspect of discourse. These semantic aspects include topics, local semantics, argumentation, and rhetoric.

5.1 Global Topics

Topics indicate what a discourse is all about. They are known as semantic macrostructures. They are strategically adopted by speakers to discursively emphasise our

good things and their bad things and de-emphasise our bad things and their good things. In the interrogation, one becomes aware of what is happening. The macropropositions for complainants are as follows:

- 1st. The FCT officials have carried out illegal and inhumane action against landowners, and tenants in the Federal Capital Territory.
- 2nd. There are several cases of illegal eviction, demolition of landed properties, revocation of titles of lands and non-payment of compensation fees.
- 3rd. The complainants want the Hearing Panel members to write a recommendation to the Senate so that the correct amount of compensation fees can be paid to them,
- 4th. The complainants want the Hearing Panel to ensure that their homes, lands and landed properties can be returned to them.

These macro propositions reflect the suppressive ideologies of the complainants in the discourse. An example from the interaction is given below:

Yes ok so in the month of December 2005, there was a policy on acquisition of land for the purpose of developing a satellite town ... So these lands were acquired from the families who were Gbagi indigenes in the place...the FCDA approved certain amount which the community doesn't know.

In the text above, the topic centres on the wrong implementation of the payment of compensation to displaced local land owners of Gbagi in Abuja. Here, the recipients are faced with two groups. That is, the displaced land owners and the government officials in conjunction with the Sakaruyi of Karu. This is in line with the suppressive ideology of the complainants. This is to discredit the government officials that handled this matter and ensure that the senate committee members for the FCT public hearing will address this issue when writing their report to the Senate. Thus, they speak based on the protective and restorative ideologies that the hearing panel hold.

- The topics selected by defendants are based on the defensive ideology that they hold. The macropropositions that control their speech are listed below:
- 1st. The defendants believe that they carried out actions based on legal and official reasons.
 - 2nd. They do not have knowledge of evictions and should not be blamed.
 - 3rd. Some of the former allocations were not merit basis.
 - 4th. The complainants should be penalised for wrong accusations.

An example from the interaction is showcases these topics:

The various ministerial approvals on that have been attached here as appendix A, B and C and the Corporate affairs Commission form CAC 10 is attached here as appendix D.

In the example below, the defendant submits legal documents and approvals that back up the actions that they took. This is to show that their actions were carried out legally. It is meant to deemphasise their negative other presentation. This is done based on the defensive and legalistic ideologies that they hold.

The topics selected by the hearing panel (HP) members are influenced by restorative and protective ideologies. The macropropositions that control the speech of the hearing panel members are listed below:

- 1st. The hearing panel members want to protect the rights of the citizens.
- 2nd. They want to correct the wrongs committed against the complainants.
- 3rd. HP members also want to prove whether illegal actions were actually carried out against the complainants.
- 4th. It is in respect of this and many other eh petitions received that police involvement were mentioned. That is why as true Nigerians, we want you to come and shed light on these

In the excerpt above, the chairman of the hearing panel informs the defendant to explain his part in the case at hand. This is done in order to know if the defendant had acted illegally so that the wrongs committed can be corrected and the rights of the Nigerian citizens protected.

5.2 Local Semantics

Local meanings are intended to project the ideologies of the interactants and add to the overall strategy of positive self presentation and negative other presentation. These local meanings in the interaction can be seen in the choice of words, pronominal references and noun phrases.

5.2.1 Lexical Choices

Plain words are words that are used in every day life. Such words have been used to reflect suppressive ideology during presentation of testimonies and interrogations. From the interactions, we find words such as *ejecting*, *demolition*, *intimidating*, *threatening*, *harassing*, *evicting*, etc. They emphasise their negative other presentation by foregrounding the bad deeds of the defendants. The suppressive ideology influences their mental models and the complainants want this ideology to influence the mental models of the HP members so that they can make recommendations in their favour. These words can be seen in the extract below:

An interim injunction restraining the defendants/respondents ... from intimidating, threatening, harassing, ejecting or attempting to eject, stopping the plaintiff/applicant or its staff from occupying, using and ...functioning in its office.

The excerpt above shows a court injunction that was given to a defendant to read in order to show that the defendant's actions were illegal and suppressive in nature.

5.2.2 Pronominal Reference

Pronominal reference used by HP members show protective ideology which is based on group knowledge, (Van Dijk, 2001). The use of 'we' by the chairman and members of the HP shows that the Senate and in fact, the legislature are out to protect the rights of the citizenry. They were elected into government by the people and they are all interested in the rights of the people. They want this protective ideology to influence the mental models of the entire populace. It emphasises the positive self presentation of the HP. An example of the interaction

is selected below:

Sen: We are your representatives...We advise...We are not going to leave you. We will attend to you all; no matter how long it takes us.

The use of collective 'we' when used by a person is typical of the language of politicians. Pronominal references are used by defendants to reflect their defensive ideology, which they expect would influence the mental models of the recipients. In the example below, the defendant wants to be seen as someone who will not do anything to hurt the citizens of the country. This is seen in the use of the pronoun I. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

I believe in the rule of law. I have never and I repeat never knowingly disobeyed court orders during my tenure... I believe in the rule of law and human rights...

5.2.3 Noun Phrases

Noun phrases are used depict the nationalist ideology and these include *patriotic Nigerian*, *true Nigerian*, *a Nigerian first and foremost*. These phrases are used to influence the mental models of the recipients. These can be seen in the examples below:

Now that you have taken the pains to shed more light as a true Nigerian, I want you to reconcile this letter from the office of the eh Secretary of government....

In the example above, the HP chairman states that the defendant should give the information that was needed, if he indeed he was working for the Nigerian people. This is done to make the defendant do what he wants him to do., as the defendant would want to be seen as a good Nigerian. Since the hearing is on television, the defendant would want to present a good self-image. Another example is presented below:

Ex. 76 I said every case has a history and there's a long file on everything but it is my duty as a patriotic Nigerian to sit here and disallow this committee from being misled.

In the example above, the defendant wants to be seen as one who is working in the interest of the Nigerian state and would, thus, not want the HP members to be misled. This is done as part of the impression management of the defendants. This is done to make his recipients to believe his own version of the story. It emphasises our positive self presentation.

5.3 Argumentation

Arguments have been used by speakers to make their opinions more acceptable, credible and truthful and these are naturally linked to their ideologies, Van Dijk (2000). There are various argumentative moves such as legality and illegality, evidentiality, examples, and detailed description used by defendants and complainants in order to argue their points and persuade the hearing panel that their respective views should be accepted. These are explained below:

5.3.1 Legality and Illegality

Legality and illegality are strategic devices used to positively represent us and negatively represent the other. In the statement below, Osakwe points out the illegal deeds of the Sakaruyi of Karu who is supposed to be a royal head. This is in line with the suppressive ideology of the complainants.

Osakwe: Yes people have been murdered and a lot of people have been threatened. Their buildings were brought down to rubble and this, according to the International eh law of resettlement; if you want...want to develop a place, what you do, you go and build a place and resettle people. But this is not done. Meanwhile that place has been allocated to people.

It is illegal for the Sakaruyi to murder citizens in order to protect his illegal deeds of paying less than what the government has ordered. Thus, he cites the International law of Resettlement. This is done in order to emphasise that the other has done something illegal and they need to be properly compensated. Complainants cite the Nigerian constitution to show the illegality if the defendant's actions.

Eh section 43 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria sir says that or permits every citizen to own properties and that is immovable property in particular. Then section 44 says that for no reason that it can be acquired or you will be dispossessed without em adequate compensation and also paid promptly and given you are right to go to court to challenge this.

The defendants also cite sections of the Nigerian constitution in order to support their arguments and position in the different cases. This can be seen in the example below:

The 1999 constitution in section 214 provides that subject to the provision of the constitution, the Nigerian Police force shall be organised and administered in accordance with such provisions as prescribed by the act of the National Assembly.

In the example above, the defendant cites the 1999 Nigerian constitution as a backup for his ignorance of the policemen's disobedience to court orders. This is done in order to deemphasise his negative self presentation. He also does this based on the defensive ideology that he holds.

5.3.2 Detailed Description

Complainants and defendants make use of detailed description as an argumentative and persuasive strategy in order to ensure that they receive a positive response from the hearing panel members. These are also influenced by the different ideologies that interactants hold. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

The Nigerian police force during my tenure and as at now is organised in 37 divisions and 4 headquarters. Each of the 36 states the Federal Capital Territory is served by a command.

In the example above, the defendant gives a detailed description of the organisation of the Nigerian Police force in order to show that he actually was not supposed to be aware of any eviction. This is done to support his argument and it is based on the defensive ideology of the

defendant. It is done in order to deemphasise his negative self presentation. Another example is presented below:

I purchased a piece of land for WRAPA at a cost of fifty-five million naira. There is a small structure and fence in it. We gave it out to ABC Transport for two million naira rent per annum and one morning... one morning, one illegal body called AMA, Abuja Metropolitan Development Agency...went, demolished the building...

In the example above, the complainant gives a vivid description of the events surrounding the demolition of a building properly purchased from the government. He emphasises the illegality of the actions of the government official which is meant to foreground their negative other presentation. This description is influenced by the suppressive ideology of the complainant.

5.3.3 Examples

Complainants and defendants cite examples as argumentative strategies in the interactions. They are used to positively represent us and negatively represent the other. Examples given are influenced by the different ideologies that the interactants hold. In the example below, the complainants cites examples of people victimised, threatened and even murdered by the Sakaruyi. This is meant to emphasise their negative other presentation by showing their bad deeds. It is in line with the complainants' suppressive ideology. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

Paul: At the moment, in the case of zone 4, there's nothing there. It's empty land. In the case of Area 7A which is supposed to be a train station, there's a massive shopping centre, actually

In the example above, the complainant cites examples of lands from which the complaints were evicted and their properties demolished. They show that those lands were either not used or were used for purposes different from the ones they were told they would be used for. This shows the bad deeds of the defendants and emphasises their negative other presentation. This is done in line with the suppressive ideology of the complainants.

5.3.4 Evidentiality

Complainants and defendants present evidence in the course of their presentation as an argumentative strategy, in order to emphasise our positive self presentation and their negative other presentation. These are also influenced and controlled by the different ideologies that they hold. An example is presented below:

Eh we want to tender at least two copies of such allocation papers as evidence that inside it...it was done on behalf of the government. Sir, the layout of the area was done. We all know that no individual can do layout except government. So there was a layout in that area. Again we seek to tender the layout. We have it here.

In the example above, a complainant tenders allocation papers to show that the FCT officials legally allocated the land. They also tender the layout for construction which was approved by the government. They do this

in order to show the illegality of the actions of the FCT officials who allocate lands and turn back to acquire those lands and even demolish the structures on those lands. Thus, the complainant emphasises their negative other presentation. It is in line with the suppressive ideology of the complainant.

Another example is presented below:

Also I have included in my presentation a court order. I mean the judgement, the certificate of judgment that specifies that the demolition were both illegal and unconstitutional...

In the excerpt above, the complainant tenders a certificate of judgment from the law court to show that it was illegal for the FCT officials to have demolished the buildings on the land. He also presents the pictures of the buildings that were destroyed. This emphasises their negative other presentation. They do this based on the suppressive ideologies that they hold as well as the protective and restorative ideologies of the hearing panel members which are the ideologies that operate in the hearing.

5.4 Rhetoric

Rhetorical devices are used to convey different ideologies. The rhetorical devices used in this public hearing interrogation include victimisation, amount of money, appeal to authority, appeal to emotion and rhetorical questions. These are explained below:

5.4.1 Victimisation

Victimisation is used to represent the negative deeds of the other. If the negative behaviour of the other is associated with threats, the ingroup is represented as a victim of such a threat. An example is written below:

Sakaruyi himself in the the palace, he vowed that as long as we are able to tackle this matter, Danjuma, Sofo, Meti and I will never live in Karu.

In this example, one of the land owners speaks and presents the threat given by the Sakaruyi in order to emphasise the illegal and bad deeds of the other. He does this in order to foreground their negative other presentation. This is in line with the suppressive ideology of the complainant. Another example is presented below:

And I know we lost some workers when they were carrying their family back to the east. They cannot accommodate their families anymore. They lost their lives and those

In the example above, the complainant talks about his workers who were adversely affected by the demolition carried out. This is done in order to show their negative other presentation by emphasising their bad deeds. His workers are the victims of their demolition exercise.

5.4.2 Appeal to Authority

In the course of their presentations, defendants and complainants cite authorities as back-up for their actions. This is done to emphasise our positive self presentation and their negative other presentation.

The speakers usually appeal to authorities and this can

be seen below:

That is the import of section 215 of our 1999 constitution. The IGP is not to be involved.

In the example above, the complainant cites the 1999 constitution as a backup for his ignorance of the disobedience of police men to court orders. This is done based on the defensive ideology that he holds and is meant to deemphasise his negative self presentation. Another example is presented below:

We did not demolish the building because the chairperson, Justice Fati Abubakar, the wife of former Head of State, Abdusalami Abubakar, is also a judge of the high court, so we wouldn't do anything out of the ordinary.

In the example below, the complainant cites the name of the chairperson of his organisation as the reason why he is careful about the measures he ought to take against the victimisation of the FCT officials. He does this to emphasise his positive self presentation. This is based on the suppressive ideology of the complainants.

5.4.3 Appeal to Emotion

Complainants appeal to the emotions of the HP members in order to ensure that they sympathise with their conditions and that the defendants restore what they have lost to them. They do this in order to emphasise their negative other presentation. This is in line with the suppressive ideologies of the complainants and the restorative and protective ideologies of the HP members.

Some people are hurt, some people lost their lives, some people became paralysed. Some people lost their means of livelihood and this is something National Assembly should not take for granted...should not take.

In the example above, the complainant cites the problems people have gone through due to the demolition and evictions that the FCT officials had carried out. Another example is presented below:

Sen.: until we get to the point we are sufficiently humble to acknowledge that people's feelings have been injured, we cannot begin to make progress...

In the examples above, the HP members also talk in way that would appeal to the emotion of the defendants. This shows the bad deeds of the defendants as people who do not care about the feelings of the Nigerian citizens. This reflects the protective ideology of the HP members as they are concerned with protecting the rights of the complainants.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have looked at the mental models of events of the interactants in the 2008 public hearing on FCT administration in Nigeria. The analyses featured different topics, linguistic patterns, argumentative and rhetorical strategies which are part of the event models of the interactants. These features were found

to be ideologically biased and were strategically used to emphasise our positive self presentation and their negative other presentation. The study reveals how interactants employ different linguistic, argumentative and rhetorical moves to persuade the hearing panel to make recommendations to the Nigerian Senate in their favour. The complainants are seen as victims of the evil deeds of the government officials while the defendants are projected as persons who are acting based on the Nigerian constitution. Further work can be carried out on the context models of the interactants as these influence the event models of the interactants. In addition, further research can be carried out on the event models of interactants in public hearings in Nigeria and in other countries in order to establish the similarities and differences between them.

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