

A STUDY OF THE LANGUAGE OF ETHNO-POLITICS IN GHANA

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Abstract

There is undoubtedly an intrinsic relationship between language and politics. That is, language is primarily used in politics to solicit for votes on campaign platforms, to outline policies, manifestoes and subtly make ideologies known. A critical aspect of language and politics that has received little attention is ethnocentric comments of politicians. It is, therefore, against this background that we examine ethnocentric speeches by Ghanaian politicians. Using van Dijk's (1995) ideological square as a framework, complemented with predication, presupposition and pronouns as models of analysis, a critical analysis was done on ten (10) perceived ethnocentric speeches of politicians in Ghana. It became evident that the comments were portrayed along the lines of "Us" vs "Them" dichotomy. Presuppositions were utilized when the speaker sought to mitigate the gravity of their comments whilst predication was employed to associate members of the in-group with positive properties as well as those of the out-group with negative properties. The Pronouns were, however, employed in an attempt to identify with certain ethnic groups. The study, therefore, has implication on the relationship that exists between language, politics and ethnocentrism.

Key Words: Ethno-politics, ethnocentrism, Ideological Square, CDA, Ghana

1.0 Introduction

In this study, we examine the language of ethno-politics as used by politicians in Ghana. Recent political history in Ghana can be traced from the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), which happens to be the first political party formed in the Gold Coast in 1947 with

the slogan: “Self-Government within the shortest possible time.” With this in mind, the party spearheaded agitations for independence. This agitation led to the invitation of Dr Kwame Nkrumah by the leaders of the party to serve as the General Secretary of the party and who worked hard to mobilise support, especially among the youth, for the UGCC agenda. In the fulfilment of his duties, a conflict of strategy evolved between him and the leadership of UGCC. This culminated in Nkrumah seceding from the party with a majority of the youth he had mobilised on behalf of the UGCC. This contributed to the formation of the second political party in the Ghana: The Convention People’s Party in 1949 with the slogan “Self Government Now” by Dr Kwame Nkrumah (Adu Boahen, 2000).

Afterwards, political parties were formed along ethnic lines such as the Togoland Congress (1951), Anlo Youth Organisation (1952), National Liberation Movement (formed in 1954 by the leaders of the UGCC in collaboration with some Ashanti Chiefs), and again in 1954, the Northern People’s Party (was also formed because Northerners wanted a representative in the elections due to the fear of being dominated by the Southerners and to win respect for their culture) were formed ahead of the 1956 General Elections in Ghana (AduBoahen, 2000; Faanu& Graham, 2017). The formation of the Ga Shifimo Kpee (1957) stemmed from the desire of the Ga and Adangbe traditionalists to reassert their control over their land. The Gaswere threatened by the influx of ‘foreigners’ into their ancestral home and allotment of their ancestral lands to these ‘foreigners’ (Coleman & Rosberg, 1964). The government at the time recognised that political parties had been formed along ethnic lines and, therefore, sought to save the situation by passing the Avoidance of Discrimination Act 1957 which prohibited the existence or formation of any political grouping based on ethnicity or religious affiliation (Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004).

The political parties in existence then amalgamated into a new unit known as the United Party. In 1969, after the military takeover of the National Liberation Council in 1966, which made the constitution obsolete, the ban on political activities was lifted. The Progress Party

(1969), National Alliance of Liberals (1969), Supreme Military Council (1972), People's National Party (1979), Popular Front Party (1979), Action Congress Party (1979) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (1979) which later metamorphosed into the Provisional National Defence Council (1981) were some of the political parties formed between the Constitution of the First Republic and that of the Fourth Republic (1992). Five political parties vied for the presidential seat in the 1992 General Election: New Patriotic Party, National Democratic Congress, National Independence Party, People's Heritage Party and the People's National Convention. The Constitution, which came into effect after the 1992 elections sanctions the formation of political parties and for independent candidates to contest in elections (Article 55, sections (1) (2)).

Over the past few years, two major political parties: the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) have dominated the Ghanaian political space. Since their individual inceptions in 1992, these parties have alternated in governing the country, Ghana. The Rawlings-NDC administration (1992-2001), the Kufour-NPP administration (2001-2009), followed by the late former President Atta-Mills-NDC administration who unfortunately died and therefore could not complete his mandated tenure. The, then, Vice President, John Mahama, complete Prof Mill's unexpired term and subsequently contested and won the 2012 Presidential elections. The NPP candidate, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo contested in the 2016 Presidential elections and defeated the incumbent President, John Mahama.

There is a general perception in Ghana that the NDC and NPP are Ewe-Northerners and Akans parties respectively as their founders are Ewe and Akan respectively (Adjei, 2013; Bossuroy, 2009 and Frempong, 2012). The parties have large support basis from their affiliated ethnic groups or regions and this becomes very evident when the nation goes to the polls every four years (peacefmonline.com/election results). Over the years, these political parties have been accusing each other of making ethnocentric statements, especially in their campaign speeches (Aboagye-Mensah, 1993, Lindberg & Morrison, 2008 and Faanu&

Graham, 2017). There have been instances where News articles have headlines of people pleading with politicians to desist from ethnocentric comments (Daily Graphic 24th August, 2018). As no study had been conducted to examine the language of ethno-politics, these articles sparked our curiosity to research into the language of ethno-politics in Ghana.

2.0 Literature Review

In order to explain ethnicity, Zanden (1990) and O'Donnell (1994) as cited in Adjei (2013) argue that an ethnic group is one with a particular culture- a way of behaving and thinking that makes it distinctive, perhaps including religious beliefs, language, dress, cuisine, folk practices, gestures and mannerisms and a sense of community. Chalfant&Labeff (1988) believe that an ethnic group's cultural system is the defining factor that makes them stand out and also argue that language and religious beliefs are the most frequent characteristics of an ethnic group. Giddens (1996) as cited in Adjei (2013) delineates ethnicity as cultural practices and outlooks that distinguish a given community of people. In other words, members of the ethnic group see themselves as culturally distinct and are seen by others to be so.

In relation to ethnicity is the concept of ethnocentrism. According to Hooghe (2008:1), ethnocentrism is "a basic attitude of expressing the belief that one's own ethnic group or one's own culture is superior to other ethnic groups or cultures." The Hooghe (2008) holds the view that ethnocentrism is an attitudinal indicator of racism, xenophobia, prejudice and mental closure. The study argues that ethnocentrism is widely used in research on social and political attitudes because it proves to be a powerful and easily identifiable attitude that can be evaluated in a valid manner with a finite number of variables. The study goes on to suggest some causes of ethnocentrism and states that earlier research works in social identity suggest that a strong identification with a group could lead to conflicts. Hooghe (2008) posits that researches frequently reveal strong individual-level determinants of ethnocentrism, such as men are more likely than women to express ethnocentric sentiments and also people with

high-level of education are less likely to express those sentiments. This is not always true as most politicians in Ghana are highly educated yet they express ethnocentric sentiments. For example, the speeches gathered for this study are ethnocentric speeches made by lawyers, academics and among others. Again, those surveys revealed that people with fewer individual resources are more dependent on in-group confirmation of their identity. In sum, Hooghe's (2008) study is basically a brief summary on some works and surveys on ethnocentrism.

Also, Axelrod & Hammond (2003) researched into the evolution of ethnocentric behaviour and explored a theory on ethnocentrism which is 'in-group favouritism.' "The essential idea of their work is that if one can distinguish how similar another is to oneself, a potential strategy would be to cooperate with others who are similar" (Axelrod & Hammond 2003: 4). They conducted simulations which established the principle that in-group favouritism can emerge and be maintained under quite minimal conditions and ethnocentric strategies and behaviour evolve in the context of local reproduction and local interaction. In application, people seek out to those from their ethnic groups who are within their reach to cooperate with them even if they find themselves in a new environment. The application of Axelrod & Hammond (2003) is relevant to the present study because this study is based on the assumption that politicians seek out those who are from their ethnic groups or where they have their support base and urge them to cooperate with them (vote for them) through the use of language (campaign and rally speeches).

Adjei (2013) states that some political analysts including Zanden (1990) agree that political campaigns are the most influential activity preceding elections. The first motivation for this line of reasoning is that party campaigns identify a group or groups with specific ideologies. Secondly, campaigns are useful in gaining the allegiance of doubtful and uninformed voters and in countries where majority of the electorates are illiterates, the campaigns help to educate the electorate on party manifestoes and programs as they are explained carefully to

the people or in a language or dialect they have mastery over. In fact, language plays pivotal role in campaigns. Thus, language and politics have an intrinsic relationship.

Other works such as Adams & Agomor (2015), Antwi (2018) and Faanu & Graham (2017) sought to understand voting or voter behaviour in Ghana. Adams & Agomor (2015) researched into the determinants of vote choice in Ghanaian elections. They defined voting behaviour as a set of personal electoral activities including participation in electoral campaigns, turnout at the polls and choosing who to vote for. (Bratton, 2013 as cited in Adams & Agomor, 2015). From their findings, they concluded that voting behaviour cannot be described as ethnic census. Antwi (2018) also conducted a similar study which explored the determinants of voting behaviour in Ghana. The study employed questionnaires in the gathering of data and made use of both quantitative and qualitative research design. The research established that majority of the Ghanaian electorates are partisan voters and that candidate's personality is the most important determinant of vote choice in both swing and core regions. "The study's result challenge the mainstream assumption and literature on African politics that presume that ethnic bloc voting is pervasive ... and that parties serve as little more than a cover for ethnicity" (Antwi, 2018: 130-131). We argue in this study that hardly would anyone own up to being ethnocentric and, especially, when they have knowledge that they are partaking in an academic study. The participants in such studies may have been affected by Labov's (1972) observers' paradox. Observer's Paradox is basically where entity that is being observed is influenced by the presence of the observer or researcher. "The aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain this data by observation" Labov (1972: 209). This creates a very ironic situation as the researcher needs honesty from his respondents yet due to the fact that he has to explain what the information being gathered will be used for the respondents end up not giving honest answers. Yet, it is unethical to collect data from respondents in a study without explaining the purpose of the study. In application, we argue that there is a possibility that the participants who filled the

question for Antwi (2018) were not entirely honest as they knew the questionnaires were being administered for a study.

A study conducted by Faanu& Graham (2017) also challenges the findings Adams &Agomor (2015) of by assessing ethnocentrism as a tool used by Ghanaian politicians to influence the behaviour of voters. They noted that prior to independence, political parties were formed along ethnic lines. In the 1954 and 1956 General Elections in Ghana, for example, Togoland Congress (1951), Anlo Youth Organization (1952), National Liberation Movement (1954) the Northern People's Party (1954). Faanu& Graham note some ethnocentric statements made in previous elections such as "...they say we Akans are feeble or afraid and that once violence breaks up we run away, but I want to disabuse the minds of such people that we are brave and courageous people just like our forbearers who founded our political tradition..." (Faanu& Graham, 2017: 6). Nana AddoDankwa made this comment when he was then the flag bearer of the NPP in 2012. Based on this and other comments, Faanu& Graham (2017) argue that flagbearers of the various political parties encourage the electorate to vote for them along ethnic lines. "There are many factors that account for these electoral outcomes in Ghana's Fourth Republic. However, the ethnic factor appears prominent ... Ethnicity is always a key campaign policy, during elections in Ghana", (Faanu& Graham 2017: 11, 14). The study concludes by stating that even the choice of flagbearers for the individual parties is influenced by ethnicity.

Ethnocentrism has a way of affecting the stability and peace of a country, policies and even the nature of those policies. Wunti&Moniruzzaman (2016), Njoroge&Kirori (2014) and Kam& Kinder (2009) have some interesting things to say on this point. Wunti&Moniruzzaman (2016) express the opinion that political ethnocentrism has influenced and fuelled ethnic conflicts in Nigeria. They argue that the elite politicians in the country, fuelled competitiveness among the ethnic groups by using the political system in favour of one group to the detriment of the other. They also argue that politicised ethnicity affects voter

behaviour (as was observed by Faanu& Graham (2017) and held the opinion that ethnicisation of politics has become a tool by which politicians identify with ethnic groups in the race for votes in Nigeria. Njoroge&Kirori (2014) also conducted a study on the significance and effects of Ethnocentrism on the Kenyan society. Their key finding was that ethnocentrism served as a medium rather than a cause of ethno-political conflicts in the country and it also adversely affected the socioeconomic development in the country. Njoroge&Kirori (2014) also added that the main cause of conflict in Kenya is the interaction between ethnocentrism and socio-economics.

The works reviewed so far, talked about ethnicity, ethnocentrism and ethnocentric behaviour as well different aspects of politics and ethnocentrism but none of the works have studied the use of language in ethnocentric speeches as used by Ghanaian politicians

3.0Theoretical Framework: van Dijk's Ideological Square

The theoretical framework that underpins this study is van Dijk's (1995) Ideological Square. This Ideological Square falls within van Dijk's broader socio-cognitive approach, which is characterised by the interaction between discourse, cognition and society. A large section of van Dijk's researches narrow down on stereotypes, the reproduction of ethnic prejudices and power abuse by the elites and resistance by dominant groups.

The socio-cognitive approach is a triangular concept that bridges the gap between society, discourse and social cognition through the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (van Dijk, 2001). Discourse in this framework (CDA) is described as the 'communicative event,' which is made up of conversational interaction, written text, facework, typographical layout, images and any other semiotic and multimedia dimension. Cognition involves personal and social cognition, beliefs and goals, evaluations and emotions and any other 'mental' or 'memory' structure, including representations or processes involved in discourse and interaction. Society includes "local and global" societal and political structures, group-

relations (of dominance and inequality), movements, institutions, organisations and social processes” (van Dijk 2001: 98 as cited in Ofori, 2015). The cognition and social dimension of the triangle provides a relevant context for the discourse.

The premise of van Dijk’s (1995) study is that ideologies are mostly “though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as pictures, photographs and movies” (van Dijk, 1995:17). Ideology is the basic “framework for organising the social cognitions shared by members of a social group, organisations and institutions” (van Dijk’1995: 19). Ideologies are abstract mental systems that organise socially shared ideas and are articulated within the conceptual triangle that links society, discourse and social cognition. This type of belief is fundamental and to some extent, questionable. It represents the social characteristics such as identity, task, norms, goals, values, positions and resources (van Dijk, 1995). On occasion, people hold so firmly to ideology that it becomes part of generally accepted attitudes of an entire community (van Dijk, 2006 as cited in Ofori, 2015). Therefore, van Dijk (1995) postulates that in order to manipulate others, one has to have access to some form of public discourse such as news, the internet, opinion articles, TV, shows and among others, ideologies have to be articulated through these platforms. In the articulation of these ideologies, relations between themselves (holders of the ideologies) and the others are represented in terms of *us* versus *them*, in which we (*us*) are associated with positive properties and they (*them*) are associated with negative things. This forms the basis of the Ideological Square, which has four moves: (1) express/emphasize information that is ‘positive’ about *us*; (2) express/emphasize information that is ‘negative’ about *them*;(3) suppress/deemphasize information that is ‘positive’ about *them*; and (4) suppress/deemphasize information that is ‘negative’ about *us*.

Van Dijk (1995) holds the opinion that “a group ideology organizes the information as well as the social and institutional actions that define membership: who belongs to the group, and who does not; who is admitted and who is not” and goes on to add that “the social functions

of ideologies are, among others, to allow members of a group to organize (admission to) their group, coordinate their social actions and goals, to protect their (privileged) resources, or, conversely, to gain access to such resources in the case of dissident or oppositional groups ... thus, discourse that expresses, establishes, confirms or emphasizes a self-interested group opinion, perspective or position, especially in a broader socio-political context of social struggle, is a candidate for special attention in such an ideological analysis” (van Dijk 1995: 23).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study was collected from various news portals. We visited news portals such as; www.myjoyonline.com, www.citifmonline.com, www.peacefmonline.com and www.ghanaweb.com to gain access to the information needed for this study. These sites were selected due to their reputation as credible sources of information or news in Ghana.

www.myjoyonline.com, www.citifmonline.com and www.peacefmonline.com are among the three leading radio stations in Ghana. Peace FM is a broadcast platform which uses Twi, a dialect of Akan, as its language of broadcasting. It is privately owned and broadcasts in every region in Ghana. One news article was collected from this site. Joy FM is owned by the Multimedia Group, a private institution, which has about six other radio stations (*Joyfm*, *Adomfm*, *Asempafm*, *Hitzfm*, *Nhyirafm*, and *Luvfm*) and three television stations (Joy Prime, Joy News and Adom TV). One news article was obtained from this site. Across the nation, the shows hosted by the Multimedia Group on their airwaves are considered thought provoking and insightful and the same is said of www.citifmonline.com, which also belongs to the radio station, *Citifm*. This is another private institution where we collected four news articles from. www.ghanaweb.com is a website that basically provides information of the happenings in Ghana to foreigners or Ghanaians living abroad. Before the advent of most of the websites or news portals, this website was the most reliable and current site for

information on Ghana. Three articles were obtained from this site. One news item was obtained from *Daily Graphic* as quoted in Faanu& Graham (2017). *Daily Graphic* belongs to Graphic Communication Group Limited (GCGL) which was established by Sir Cecil King in 1950. It is also the largest and leading newspaper in Ghana and it is state owned. It should be noted that all the ten (10) perceived ethnocentric comments have been put under appendix.

3.2 Models of Analysis

The models of analysis employed in the analysis of the data obtained in this study include the use of pronouns, predication and presuppositions. This section expounds on these models.

3.2.1 Pronouns

Pronouns are grammatical items that belong to the closed system family (Nkopruruk&Saheed, 2018). Grammatical items in the closed class do not readily lend themselves to inflection. Pronouns function in the place of nouns to avoid unnecessary repetition (Eka 2008 as cited in Nkopruruk&Saheed, 2018). According to Abia (2013) as cited in Nkopruruk&Saheed (2018), pronouns are categorized into four; person, number, gender and case. Due to the nature of the study, the focus is on person and number only.

Person refers to the roles played by entities in an interaction. There are three observable characters: first, second and third person. The first person (I, me, my, mine and we, us, our, ours) is seen as the person speaking. The second person (you, you, your, yours) is considered as a listener, that is, being spoken to and the third person (it, he, she, they, them, their, her, hers, his etc.) is the person being spoken about (Nkopruruk&Saheed, 2018). Number, on the other hand, refers to the numerical distinction made to characters involved in the speech activity (Nkopruruk&Saheed, 2018). Pronouns are classified into singular or plural. Singular plurals include I, me, you, he, him, she, it etc. and plural pronouns include we, you, they, etc.

Types of pronouns include personal pronouns which refer to the person speaking or being spoken to (I, you, he, him, we, us, me, she, her, they, them); possessive pronouns indicate ownership and express a possession relationship to the person speaking or being spoken to (our, mine, theirs, her); partitive pronouns which refer to parts (not the whole) of the antecedents (what they represent) and include; any, some, anything etc. (Nkopruruk&Saheed, 2018). Reflexive pronouns refer directly to the nouns or the noun phrase and indicate a co-referential relationship i.e. when the subject and object are the same referent (yourself, himself, herself, myself, themselves) and finally indefinite pronouns which refer to unspecified referents and often function as adjectives (Nkopruruk&Saheed, 2018). They include anyone, everyone, another, no body, no one, all, any, everybody several, somebody, someone etc.

3.2.2 Predication

Referential strategies bear the imprint of value judgment and represent the choice of words used to represent more directly the values and characteristics of social actors (Richardson, 2007). These strategies are called predication strategies or “the very basic process and result of linguistically assigning qualities to persons, animals, objects, events, actions and social phenomena” (Reisigl&Wodak, 2001: 54). Wodak&Myaer (2001) also argue that predication involves phrases or terms that appear in stereotypical evaluative attributions of positive and negative traits and implicit or explicit predicates. There are six ways of using predication: (a) specific forms of reference based on explicit denotation or more or less implicit connotation. e.g. the blueberry is very blue; (b) attribution in the form of adjectives (participle clauses, conjunctive clauses, predicate prepositional phrases). e.g. a gloomy outlook; (c) predicatives/predicate nouns, adjectives or pronouns e.g. he is the *acting head* of the department. *Acting head* is a predicative noun as it gives more information on the subject which is *he* in this context; (d) use of collocation e.g. deep pockets, strong sense, beautiful girl; (e) implicit allusions, presuppositions, implicatures e.g. He does not like to spend money but he is no *Scrooge* (allusion); and (f) explicit comparison like similes e.g. as *busy as a bee*

3.2.3 Presuppositions

A presupposition is a taken for granted implicit claim that is embedded within a text (Richardson, 2007). Here, the proposed content is ordinary unless there is a cautious interpretive effort on the part of the hearer. This means that the asserted content and implicatures are subjected to a certain level of interrogation. There are also six types of presuppositions (Wodak, 2002): (a) existential Presupposition e.g. the book (this presupposes that the book exists); (b) factive Presupposition e.g. she didn't realize that he was ill (it presupposes that he was ill); (c) non-factive Presupposition e.g. I dream of the day that I become of age (this presupposes that I am not of age); (d) lexical Presupposition e.g. he stopped eating (this presupposes that he was eating); (e) structural Presupposition e.g. who came here? (This presupposes that someone came here); and counter-factual Presupposition e.g. If I had a car, I would drive to work every day (this presupposes that I do not have a car).

Reah (2002) as cited in Richardson (2007) postulates that there are three linguistic structures that are commonly used to mark presuppositions or presupposes meaning. The first involves certain words such as change of state verbs (stop, begin, continue), or implicative verbs (manage, forget). E.g. Have you stopped eating? This presupposes that you were eating. The second structure involves the use of the definite article (the) and possessive articles (his/her). E.g. the boy presupposes that there is a boy. Wh- questions (why, who) also trigger the presuppositions. E.g. Who just entered the room? This presupposes that someone has entered the room. Richardson (2007) argues that there is a fourth trigger of presupposed meaning which involves nouns and adjectives that modify noun phrases which he refers to as nominal presuppositions. E.g. Ghana's health system takes on a new look, which presupposes that there was an old look.

4.0 Analysis and Discussions

4.1 The use of Pronouns

Bache (2000) states that pronouns are a heterogeneous word class, comprising personal pronouns (*I, me, you, he, him, she, her, it etc.*), possessive pronouns (*my, mine, your, yours etc.*). The main value of pronouns in speech or writing is to substitute a noun so as to avoid repetition. In excerpt 1, pronouns such as *we* and *our* are used by the speaker to denote that he is a member of the in-group which is represented by '*us*' in van Dijk's ideological square. *We* and *our* are 1st person plural pronouns and involve the speaker and another person or group. Here, Nana Addo informs his supporters that when they [the supporters] are referred to as cowards it affects him as he is a part of the group [Akans] e.g. '*They say **we** Akans...*' Through the use of this expression, Akufo-Addo aligns with an ethnic group which is the Akans. The Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana and comprises of sub-groups which span eight (Ashanti, Eastern, Brong, Brong-East, Ahafo, Central, Western North and Western Regions) of sixteen regions in Ghana (Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). Akufo-Addo is an Akyem which is one of the Akan sub-groups. Akufo-Addo uses the 3rd person plural pronoun '*they*' to refer to the people who labeled his group negatively, that is the NDC. The use of '*they*' implies that the people in question are not members of the 'in group' or are of the 'out group' (van Dijk, 1995). He also associates Akans to the party by stating that '*we are...just like **our** fore bearers who founded **our** political tradition*'. He again uses the 1st person singular pronoun '*I*' in the expression '*I want to disabuse ...*' to indicate that he has authority and in this context, he uses that authority to disabuse the minds of those who referred to the members of his group as '*feeble or afraid*' [negative connotation]. He does not only persuade them that they have associated his group with wrong characteristics but also provides new words '*brave and courageous*' which have positive connotations. This is directly in line with Van Dijk's Ideological Square which argues that you suppress the negative information associated with us and emphasize the positive information we are associated with. Akufo-Addo projects the Ideological Square highly through the use of

pronouns as he uses the pronouns to associate the in-group with positive characteristics as well as disassociates them from negative information.

Similarly, excerpt two also begins by employing the 2nd person plural '**you**' which gives the impression that the comment concerns a different group of people. Osafo-Mafo later aligns himself with that group through the use of the pronoun *we*. He is a member of the group with the resources which implies that his group is rich or has substance. He uses the indefinite pronoun *another* in the expression '**another** person' to indicate that they are being governed by someone or people from a different group.

A declaration of war is usually made by the highest political power within a geographical or political location. In the excerpt 3, Kennedy Agyapong uses the 1st person singular pronoun *I* in the expression '**I declare...**' to speak as one with authority. By implication, it can be argued that he views himself as a person with power that exceeds that of the Head of State and can declare war without consulting anyone but himself. He pitches Ashanti's against Voltarians by positing himself as the highest political power in both locations through the use of the 1st person singular pronoun. The irony of this statement is that Agyapong uses the 2nd person plural pronoun '*you*' in '*If anyone touches you, butcher him with a cutlass...*' which is normally used when a statement which precludes the speaker is made. The *you* makes reference to Akans who being resisted from registering at the Odododiodio constituency. It can be argued that he sees himself as one who cannot be touched so would not be found 'butchering' anyone.

'*Their*' is a 3rd person plural pronoun which indicates possession. Former President Kufour in excerpt 5 personalizes the elections for the people by placing himself with the in-group and giving the impression that they are the only people that matter here through the use of '*their own*' and '*very own*' which doubly emphasizes the fact that the candidate belongs to them

and only them. It can be argued that this was a ploy to invoke strong emotional and familial ties between the candidates and the people in order to influence their voting behavior.

Mahama in excerpt 6 opens his statement by courting the sympathy of his listeners with the use of the first person plural singular pronoun 'I' in '*I feel sad...*' In the recording, shouts of *ow* and *aw* could be heard from his supporters after the full statement and that was their way of responding to the emotions provoked by the statement. He also employs Kufour's method of the use of familial terms such as '*brother*' and the 3rd person possessive pronoun '*our*' to refer to the people from the north in '*...I see some of **our northern brothers**...*' who are members of the NPP as well as Bawumia; '*...let **our brother Bawumia**...*' who was then the running mate of Nana Addo. Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia hails from the Northern Region of Ghana. It is on this basis that Mahama refers to Bawumia as *our brother*. He gives the impression that he is saddened that Bawumia who has familial ties to all of them *our brother* has lost his way and joined the other side. He again uses the familial term 'father' alongside the 3rd person possessive plural '*our*' in the pronouncement; '***our father Prof. Mills passed away***' which denotes that he as well as his listeners are fatherless. It can be argued that this was another attempt to garner sympathy. Implicitly, Mahama makes it known that the out-group will take advantage of them through the use of the 3rd person plural pronoun '*they*' to refer to the out-group and the 2nd person plural pronoun '*you*' in '***They will use you and dump you***'. The use of *you* implies that Mahama is not part of those who can be used and be dumped as he is not vulnerable but they (his audience) are vulnerable. Mahama goes on to posit his party as a party that accepts people regardless of their ethnicity. It can be inferred that Mahama uses the late former Vice President, Aliu Mahama as a case in point. Aliu Mahama was the Vice President of the Kufour administration (2001-2008). He was born in Yendi also in the Northern Region of Ghana. After serving under Kufour for eight years, Aliu Mahama contested in the NPP's presidential primaries in 2007 and lost to Nana Akufo Addo who hails from the Eastern Region of Ghana (an Akan dominated region). It is generally believed that Mahama uses the case of Aliu Mahama as a support for the '*they will use you and dump you*'

comment. Mahama negatively projected the NPP as ethnocentric, that is, they will use Dr. Bawumiah and dump him, meaning Bawumia will never get the opportunity to serve as a President as it happened to former Vice President AliuMahama. On the other hand, Mahama projected the NDC positively because as a Vice President to the late President Mills, he, a Northerner got the opportunity to serve as a president when Prof Mills died and according him, Bawumiah will never have that opportunity. Therefore, all Northerners must vote for him massively to win the elections.

Madam Attivor in excerpt 8 makes it known to her audience (Ewes) that her future depends on their votes through the use of the 2nd person plural possessive pronoun ‘*your*’ as in the noun phrase *your vote*. It has been established above that the use of the 2nd person plural excludes the speaker. We argue that she was implicitly asking for support from the people along ethnic lines through the use of pronouns in order to gain votes for the Parliamentary as well as Presidential candidates. She makes reference to ministers, but as at the time of speaking, she was no longer in office. With regard to van Dijk’s Ideological Square, she associates *them*, NPP with negative information that is being tribalistic or ethnocentric and biased in meting out of justice as they singled out a group of people from a particular ethnic group, Ewes, and ignored those who also faulted in the discharge of their duties but were from other tribes and this corresponds with move 2 of the Ideological Square.

In excerpt 7, Mahama makes a statement which is ironic considering his location at the point of speaking; ‘*As for Kumasi, even if **we** construct roads tarred with gold, **they** will tell **us** that **we** did nothing*’. The supporters he was addressing were supporters of the NDC who lived in Kumasi and no additional expressions were added to make distinction yet the people made sounds of approval in response to the message. The speaker uses the 3rd person plural pronouns *we* and *us* to describe members of the in-group. These members live in Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti Region which is a stronghold of the NPP as has been stated above yet, Mahama distinguishes them from every other person who lives in Kumasi through the use of

the pronouns above. He characterizes the rest of the people (out-group) as ‘Kumasi’ and *they*. He also uses *we* in *We have noted the promise we made to Ghanaians for which we were voted into power* to associate members of the in-group with faithfulness as they have not forgotten their promise to Ghanaians. Again, this aligns with van Dijk’s Ideological Square ‘express information which is negative about them in this case ‘*ungrateful*’ or difficult to please while associating the in-group with positive information.

Honorable Quaitoo in excerpt 10 uses the noun phrase *our brothers* to imply a certain familial bond between him and the people he is speaking to: *our* (which has already been expounded on above as the 3rd person plural possession) and the people he is talking about who are ‘*brothers*’. It can be argued that this expression was an attempt to be considered as a member of the group in a bid to lessen the gravity of his comments. He uses the statement *I lived there for 27 years; I speak Dagbani like a Dagomba...* to assert that he has history with the people and as a way of justifying his use of the expression *our brothers* and solidifying his relationship to the people of the north by making it known that he’s lived with them for 27 years of his life and speaks their language. Through the statement, he made himself a de facto authority on things pertaining to the people of northern Ghana as well as a credible character witness. He uses the pronoun *they* which is a 3rd person plural pronoun and used to refer to an entity outside the speaker’s circle to refer to the people of the north and also associates them with fraudulent practices; *It’s just a way of taking money from the government; that’s what they do all the time*. He goes on to assign himself to the same group as the people he is addressing through the use of ‘*we*’ in *We have no records of that* which denotes that he as well as his listeners have no evidence to back the claim made by the northern farmers.

4.2 The Use of Predication

Predication is “the very basic process and result of assigning qualities to persons, animals, objects, events, actions or social phenomena” (Reisigl&Wodak, 2001: 54). Through predicational strategies, persons are characterized with respect to quality, quantity, space,

time and among others. These strategies may be realized as attributes (adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, conjunctive clauses, infinitive clauses and participial clauses); predicates, collocation or explicit comparison and other rhetorical figures and by more or less implicit allusions, evocations and presuppositions.

In the first excerpt, Akufo-Addo employs predication in an attempt to disassociate the in-group (Akans) from the (negative) characterization of being '*feeble or afraid*' or cowards (move four of the Ideological Square). He associates Akans with positive characterizations such as being '*brave and courageous*' and again describes their party as '*the biggest political movement in Ghana*'. The use of language by Akufo-Addo in this situation projects the first move of the Ideological Square, that is, emphasize information that is positive about us.

Similarly, excerpt 2 OsafoMarfo also employs a predicative expression '*without thoseresources*' is employed in the description of the people who are governing the nation ('*they*' or the out- group). This in turn also emphasizes negative information about *them*. OsafoMaafo emphasizes positive information concerning the in-group through the predicate '*have all the resources*'. In this excerpt, the in-group was the Akans. According to Asante &Gyimah-Boadi (2004), the Akans are the predominant ethnic group in Ghana (49.1%). The Akan dominated areas of Ghana are rich in resources such as gold, manganese, bauxite, timber, oil, cocoa etc. Collectively, the Akan areas have the highest natural resources in Ghana. Therefore, the comment of OsafoMarfowas an attempt to subtly persuade his listeners, in this case Akans, to vote for their own, another member in the in-group (Akufo-Addo) so their resources could be used for in the development of Akan dominated areas where the natural resources of Ghana are situated.

The accolade (or in this context the predicative expression) of being the '*NDC World Bank*' in excerpt 3 was first used by the founder of the NDC and former President Rawlings in 2001 (Asante &Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). This expression was given to the Volta Region in view of their voting pattern, as they tend to vote massively in favor of the NDC. In the 2008 elections

[which was the point of contention in the events leading to the comments in excerpt 3], the NDC garnered 82.5% of the total votes cast to the NPP's 15.4% in the Volta Region as compared to 26.0% by the NDC and 72.5 % by the NPP in the Ashanti Region (peacefmonline.com./2008 election results). This again validates the assertion by Antwi (2018) that Volta Region is a core region for the NDC. In his speech (excerpt 3), KwabenaAgyapongis perceived to have used the predicative nouns '*no human beings*' and '*full of animals*' to describe the people of the Volta Region. The margin between the NDC win in the Volta Region and the NPP win in the Ashanti Region in terms of percentage is 10.0% which is relatively small. KwabenaAgyapong implicitly informs the general public through the use of the above predicative nouns that the votes from Volta land were tampered with or manufactured as animals do not partake in human elections and if there are no human beings in the Region, then who or where did such huge number of votes emanated from? Here, Mr. Agyapong associates the out-group with negative characteristics through the use of predication.

In his submission (excerpt 5), former Kufour makes a claim that the people have good fortune and the underlying factor of this good fortune is that the NPP Presidential candidate is a personality with whom they have familial ties with and this is denoted by the predicative noun '*their own son*'. Akufo-Addo's father Edward Akufo-Addo hailed from Akropong-Akuapem and it was in this same township that the former President Kufour made this comment. The use of the predicative noun in the speech puts the NPP Presidential candidate and the people of Akropong-Akuapem in the same group. Thus, it makes them members of the in-group. It can, therefore, be argued that Kufour's use of 'son' was an attempt to remind the people of Akropong that Akufo-Addo's father hailed from their town, which means his son is their son. Hence, they should vote "their own son" massively in the election.

In excerpt 8, the speaker refers to the NPP as being tribalistic or ethnocentric; '*When the NPP won power in 2001, most ministers who were Ewes were imprisoned...*' She explicitly singles

out her ethnic group with the help of the relative clause *'who were Ewes'* as the target of discrimination while playing on the ethnic sentiments of party faithful who turned up at the rally by stating that; *'I want to remind you that it is your vote that will decide if Fifi Kwetey and I will be persecuted and put behind bars or not'*. Through the use of the relative clause *'who were Ewes'*, she creates an in-group which includes herself and ewes. Madam Attivor informs her audience that some of the members of the in-group are being discriminated against and in order to end or prevent the discrimination, they would have to vote for the NDC.

In excerpt 9, Spio-Garbrah explicitly draws a tribal line between the NDC and NPP by declaring his party non-ethnocentric with the help of the attribute that the NDC is a *'nationally based'* while the NPP as ethnocentric *'there are some parties which have declared that their leader should not come outside the five Akan regions'*. Here, members of the in-group have been characterized positively as *'nationally based'* while the out-group were characterized negatively as ethnocentric. These characterizations are directly in-line with the moves of van Dijk's ideological square. The five Akan regions are: Ashanti Region, Eastern Region, BrongAhafo Region, Western Region and Central Region. These Regions are mostly inhabited by Akan speakers or other languages within the Tano group of languages. One ironic thing to note is that the NPP has not had a flagbearer nor a President from the Central Region yet the NDC has had a Vice President, flagbearer and President from the Central Region. The sum of Spio-Garbrah's argument was that his group, the NDC, has a better reputation in terms of ethnic diversity as compared to the out-group, NPP.

In excerpt 10, the speaker, Quaitoo associates them (the people of the north) with negative characteristics such as being *'difficult'*, indirectly calls them liars in the statement; *'Nobody can substantiate. If anybody says that his farm was destroyed by armyworm, the person would have to come and prove it'*. He makes the point that without evidence, the word of these farmers should not be considered seriously.

4.3 The Use of Presuppositions

A presupposition is a taken-for-granted, implicit claim, embedded within the explicit meaning of a text or utterance (Reah, 2002). In excerpt 2, it can be inferred that members of the in-group have wealth or are rich '*you have all the resources*' and this presupposes that out-group, NDC, has no resources or are without wealth or are poor '*...the one who has no resources*'. This projects the first (express information that is positive about us) and second (express information that is negative about them) moves of the Ideological Square respectively. Certain implicit claims such as a) the rich (in-group) have allowed poor (out-group) people to govern them can be inferred from the statement; '*No one who is the source ... of resources allows another person without those resources the chance [to rule over them]*' b) in order to conserve our wealth, we should vote for a fellow from resource endowed region [probably because the person will have no need of our wealth as s/he is rich as we. However, the poor or out-group will drain our wealth] can be inferred from comments such as '*We should protect ourselves, we should protect **our** incomes*'. In sum, the speaker tries to convince his listeners to vote for someone from the resource-endowed regions in order to control their resources for their collective good.

Kennedy Agyapong, Assin Central Member of Parliament is perceived to have made the comment; '*today, I declare war*' uses the adverb (of time) '*today*', this presupposes that there was no war in the country before his speech or his declaration. Again, the use of the adverb presupposes that from the moment of speaking, the state of the nation in terms of stability or peace had changed (excerpt 4). This declaration of war was as a result of some Akans who reside and have businesses at the Odododiodio Constituency in the Greater Accra region were vehemently resisted by the MP in that constituency from registering in to vote in that Area. In response, Honorable Agyapong also declared war on Non-Akans who will attempt to register to vote in Akan dominated constituencies. Interestingly, this portrays a great sense of ethnocentric politics subtly engineered by the two main political parties in Ghana.

Excerpt 7 presents what the researcher terms as one of the most ironic situations in Ghanaian politics. Here, then President Mahama of the NDC finds himself in Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti Region, which is considered as a major stronghold of the NPP. In the 2012 elections, the NPP won 70.9% and the NDC had 28.4% of the total votes casted. One would have thought that it would be a prime time and place for him to cajole and woo the people to vote for him. Instead, he called the Asantes difficult and hard to please, by using an Akan proverb *'the chicken never pleases the Hawk no matter how well she dances'* and ungrateful *'as for Kumasi, even if we construct roads tarred with gold, they will tell us that we did nothing'*. In so doing, Mahama displays use of the second move of the Ideological Square, which states that you emphasize information that is negative about them.

5.0 Conclusion

This study has revealed that ethnocentric comments were portrayed along the lines of *Us* versus *Them*. It implies that Ghanaian politicians pitch one ethnic group against the other, associate themselves with their own ethnic group or other ethnic groups to which their party is affiliated with, with positive information while the out-group were associated with negative characteristics. Also, the study identified a rampant usage of pronouns in order to identify with certain ethnic groups. Pronouns such as *we*, *our* were used to either associate *Us* with good properties or to disassociate *Us* from bad properties as well as to give the impression of unity or oneness. Speakers used the first person pronoun to distinguish him/herself from the crowd or others. In this paper, the speakers used *I* to serve as symbols of authority, to draw attention to themselves in an effort to seek sympathy or guilt trip the audience. *They* was also employed to refer to members of the out-group. The 3rd person plural and its possessives as well as the 2nd person plural were used to refer to members of the in-group with exception of the speaker. Predication was employed to associate members of the in-group with positive properties and associate members of the out-group with negative properties as well as to deemphasize the negative attributes to the in-group. With regard to presupposition, speakers

employed it in attempts to remain subtle or to lessen the gravity of their speeches so as not to be so obvious or explicitly ethnocentric.

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APPENDIX

Background of the Data and Excerpts

Excerpt 1

In 2010, the Member of Parliament for Atiwa Constituency in the Eastern Region of Ghana passed away after a protracted illness. As mandated by the Constitution of Ghana, the Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana opened nominations so all interested qualified individuals and political parties could file a nomination. The by-election was held on 31st August, 2010. According to reports, a woman drove into the crowd and injured some people. When the car slowed, members of the crowd attacked the vehicle. This eventually led to an eruption of violence in the region. Before the 2012 elections, at a gathering of supporters of the party in Koforidua in the Eastern Region, the then flagbearer Nana Addo-DankwaAkufoAddo gave a speech and in the speech he made the following comments in reference to the Atiwa by-election (*Daily Graphic*, 10th February, 2011 as quoted in Faanu& Graham, 2017);

*“The Atiwa by-election showed just a little of what **we** are capable of doing.... **They** say **we** Akans are **feeble or afraid** and that once violence breaks up, **we** run away but **I** want to disabuse the minds of such people that **we** are brave and courageous people just like **our** forbearers who founded **our** political tradition. You must understand that courageous people formed this party. **Our** leaders who formed this party that has now become the biggest political movement in Ghana were not cowards. So, in 2012, **we** need to be courageous because **all die be die**”.*

Excerpt 2

In 2015, a year before the 2016 General Elections, an audio recording of what is said to be the voice of Mr. Yaw OsafoMaafo was leaked. Mr. Yaw OsafoMaafo was a former Finance Minister in the Kufour administration who is currently the Senior Minister in the Akufo-Addo administration. He hails from in the Ashanti Region. OsafoMaafo accepted that the voice was his but claimed that the audio had been doctored though he could not provide any evidence to support this. He later alleged that the audio was leaked by a high ranking member of his own party due to the fact the meeting under which the recording was made was ‘closed doored’. Below are his comments as reported by *citifmonline.com* (25th February, 2015);

*“... **you** have all the resources, but you have no say in the management of the resources and that is what is happening. Your development depends on the one who has no resources. You can’t say this openly. **We** should protect ourselves, **we** should protect **our** incomes. No one who is the source of income, the source of revenue, the source of resources allows another person without those resources the chance [to rule over them].*

Excerpt 3

Again in 2012, a leading member of the NPP, Mr. Kwabena Agyapong, was accused by the NDC representatives in the EC's strong room of conspiring with some others in the NPP to commit electoral fraud in the 2008 elections. Mr. Kwabena Agyapong was the spokesperson for former President Kufour and had himself been an aspirant for flag-bearer ship of the party in 2007. In the 2008 elections, he was an NPP representative in the EC strong room. In response to the accusations, he made some comments which have been paraphrased by ghanaweb.com (9th January, 2012) as;

*"Since there were **no human beings** in the Volta Region, his party was going to challenge the figures from that part of the country, an indication that to the NPP, the Volta Region conceivably is **full of animals** who could not have been capable of producing impressive elections figures that have earned the Region its 'NDC World Bank' accolade".*

Excerpt 4

In April of 2012, the Country was hit again with another round of ethnocentric sentiments by Mr. Kennedy Agyapong. These comments came on the back of Mr. Kwabena Agyapong's comments. Mr. Kennedy Agyapong, MP for Assin North made those comments in response to attempts by some NDC parliamentary candidates in the Greater Accra Region to prevent Akan traders from registering in their constituencies. The following comments were made on his Madina-based radio station, Oman Fm and were reported by ghanaweb.com (16th April, 2012);

"Today, I declare war in this Country, Gbevlo-Lartey and his people; IGP should know this Voltarians in the Ashanti Region will not be spared. If anyone touches you, butcher him with a cutlass..."

Excerpt 5

A few weeks before the 2016 General Election, the NPP held a rally at the Akropong Constituency. At that rally, former President John Agyekum-Kufour who is the founder of the NPP campaigned for the flagbearer of the party, Nana Akufo-Addo. He made the following comments in his speech (ghanaweb.com; 15th November, 2016);

*"Akropong-Akuapem people are fortunate to have **their own son** contesting for the presidency. If we say **we need change**, then, we have to rally behind **our very own**. Wherever the Elephant goes, there is progress. Be wary of campaign promises and also of anybody who advises you to vote skirt and blouse. Vote for both the NPP parliamentary candidate and Nana Akufo-Addo. The President is the one who sets policies for parliament to approve, so, don't be deceived at all. Vote for the NPP candidate and Nana Akufo-Addo and you will see development in your constituency".*

Excerpt 6

In the run up to the 2016 elections, the incumbent President John Dramani Mahama visited Lawra in the Northern Region of Ghana on his campaign trail. He urged voters in the three northern regions to vote him and his party to power. He supported this statement by adding that the NDC is the only party that allows northerners to rise to the height of political power. The researcher transcribed the audio recording of that campaign below (citifmonline.com, 20th November, 2016);

*“Sometimes I feel sad when I see some of **our northern brothers** running around and also doing this. **They** will use you and dump you. I want to live to see the day. You let anything happen today and let **our brother Bawumia** say he is standing for President in NPP. **They** will never give it to him. I can assure you. When the misfortune hit us and **our father Prof. Mills** passed away. The constitution said that the vice president should take over, I did. But then, we were close to an election. If it was **another party**, they would have insisted that there should be a congress and in that congress I would have been contested and they would have given the leadership to somebody else. ... the NDC’s National Executive Committee called a meeting and said no... John Mahama is the vice president, we are going to support him to lead us into this election and we went into the election and God gave victory to us. ... The NDC ... is a party that opens opportunities for all people of Ghana irrespective of your ethnic or religious affiliation”*

Excerpt 7

Former President John Mahama addressed teeming supporters of the NDC in the run off to the 2016 elections at the office of the Ashanti Regional Coordinating Council on a three-day tour of the Region. He made the following comments in the backyard of an NPP stronghold (citifmonline.com, 6th May, 2014);

*“However, the Akans have a saying that, **the chicken never pleases the Hawk no matter how well she dances**; but that shouldn’t discourage us. We have noted the promise we made to Ghanaians for which we were voted into power. **As for Kumasi**, even if we construct roads tarred with gold, they will tell us that we did nothing”.*

Excerpt 8

Former Transport Minister, Dzifa Attivor who resigned her ministerial position following a controversial bus branding saga mounted a campaign platform during the launch of a group known as ‘Ketu South for Fifi and Mahama’. The purpose of the platform was to garner votes for Mahama who was the flagbearer of the NDC as well as the Parliamentary candidate for that constituency Fifi Kwetey. Madam Attivor made the following comments (peacefmonline.com, 26th April, 2016);

“When the NPP won power in 2001, most ministers who were Ewes were imprisoned, including Serlomey, Abodakpi and a host of other ministers. Does that mean that no individual from any other tribe has faulted in the discharge of their duties? I want to remind you that it is your vote that will decide if FifiKwetey and I will be persecuted and put behind bars or not”.

Excerpt 9

Former Trade Minister Dr. EkowSpio-Gabrah in 2017, held an interview with Joy News’ Joseph Ackah-Blay. The interview was conducted after an NDC press conference to announce its manual registration. Joy News holds the opinion that Spio-Garbrah’s Comment is a recycled version of Mahama’s ‘Bawumia won’t be President’. The comments he made were reported by myjoyonline.com (17th October, 2017);

“The NDC is a party that has had Presidents from the Volta, Central and Northern regions but this is not the case in the NPP. The party [NDC] is nationally based but there are some parties which have declared that their leader should not come outside the five Akan regions”

Excerpt 10

An army worm outbreak occurred on farms in northern Ghana in 2017. The farmers from the North demanded for compensation for the crops which had been ruined in the army worm invasion. Again, according to *Graphiconline* (23rd August, 2017), the request for compensation was made by all affected farmers yet the comments below were directed to those in the northern regions of Ghana. Mr. William Quaitoo who was then the deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture as well as MP for AkimOda held the opinion that the northern farmers could not be trusted in their assessment of the damage and added that (citifmonline.com, 29th August, 2017);

*“**Our brothers** [in northern Ghana], it is so difficult to deal with them. **I** lived there for 27 years; **I** speak Dagbani like a Dagomba and all that. **They** are very **difficult people**. Nobody can substantiate. If anybody says that his farm was destroyed by armyworm, the person would have to come and prove it. **We** have no records of that. It’s just a way of taking money from the government; that’s what **they** do all the time”.*