

**MODALITY FUNCTIONS IN PUBLIC OPINION ON THE 2015 NIGERIAN
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS IN THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God the Father, the Giver of all good things and the Sustainer of my destiny.

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With a thankful and a grateful heart, I deeply express my gratitude to God Almighty, by whose guidance and providence I am attaining another feat in life. To Him alone be praise, honour and adoration for all you have done and are yet doing in my life great indeed are YOUR works and they are marvellous in my eyes.

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Mrs. Ojo Oluwabusayo Folasayo

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this study was carried out by Ojo Oluwabusayo Folasayo in the Department of English Language, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Public opinion columns in newspapers often provide vital information on electioneering. Studies in Nigerian political discourse have examined modality in debates and speeches with little attention paid to its functions in the diversity of public opinion on Nigerian Presidential election results. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate modality functions in public opinion on the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results in the newspapers. This is in order to establish how modals help to construct meaning, which aids the understanding of public opinion on election results.

The study adopted Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar as framework. A corpus of 190 items, including letters to the editor (60), opinion columns (70) and readers' comments (60) on 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results were collected. The data was purposively collected from five newspapers published with robust content on public opinion. These newspapers were *The Nation*, *The Guardian*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *Vanguard* and *The Punch* published between March and April 2015. The data was subjected to discourse analysis.

Public opinion was divided as to the acceptance or otherwise of 2015 Nigeria's Presidential election. This yielded different viewpoints: peace and unity, obligation and social responsibility, historical victory, new dawn of democracy, condemnation, and sportsmanship associated with nationalistic, moralistic and historical grounds. The nationalistic ground, ('It **should** be a unifying force... for genuine nationhood') posited that the conduct of 2015 Presidential election was a positive pointer to national unity. The moralistic view ('while congratulating Muhammadu Buhari, one **must** thank President Goodluck Jonathan for living up to his oath of office and promise that he **would** conduct a credible election') saw the election as free and fair with the use of modal auxiliary verbs to depict obligation on the part of Nigerians to express gratitude to the out-going president; and responsibility on part of the out-going President in respect of his promise to conduct free and fair elections. The historical ground ('Nigerians needed... not only reject violence but promote unity'), contrasted the presidential election with previous electoral experiences characterised by violence and acrimony. Also, the historical view ('...we **must** forget our old battles, past grievances ...'), demonstrated by modal auxiliaries - 'will', 'must' and 'should' expressed obligation on the part of the elect and the electorate to allow peace to reign. Lexical modal verbs: 'confirmed', 'shown' and 'need to' expressed affirmative reactions; while auxiliary verbs like 'cannot', 'will not', 'may not' expressed negative reactions, ('The desperate and despicable show of shame exhibited by Orubebe **confirmed** the ruling party's anti democratic plots against the people of Nigeria'), which implied that the election results were biased. Lexical modal verbs like 'believe', 'thank', 'promised', and modal auxiliaries such as 'must', 'should' and 'would' expressed affirmative reactions that suggested moral and social obligations.

Linguistic modalities, backed with nationalistic, moralistic and historical principles, were used to express varied public opinions on Nigeria's 2015 Presidential election results. Thus, the combination of linguistic modalities is insightful for proper understanding of public opinion on election results as represented in the Nigerian context.

Keywords: Presidential election results, Public opinions on Nigerian elections, Modality in language, Media discourse.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Public opinion is an essential factor in any democratic system of government. The citizens express their point of view in different forms through the use of language. Public discourses are social platforms where individuals converge to freely convey and discuss societal problems and through discussions manipulate political ends. It is thus a discourse in which people express their opinions on issues of shared interests to probably reach a universal target about matters.

Politics as defined by Beard (2000) “is the action that takes place in a confined institute like a political party, a government or a parliamentary system of government in order to comply with social responsibilities and duties”. A political organization is characterized as a great effort made so as to obtain and maintain power and its members. In most cases, politicians, generally depend on excellent speech making to influence the people that their policies can and should be trusted, and that the people should have faith in them. The procedure of compelling the citizens is what brings language and politics together. This is as a result of the fact that language is used by politicians in influencing the people’s decisions on political matters; as such, language and politics have a symbiotic relationship.

The 2015 elections can be viewed as a constructive step towards democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The elections allowed the country to attain inter-party rotation of the presidency for the first time in its electoral history. The development of electoral democracy in Nigeria has been delayed and difficult. Since Nigeria’s independence in 1960, the country has organised nine general elections and numerous regional, state, and local elections; of these elections; the 1979, 1993 and 1999 polls were conducted by military regimes to allow for changeover to civil rule, while the other elections were conducted by the incumbent civilian regimes to strengthen democratic rule.

The 2007 general elections, in particular, brutally dented Nigeria’s democratic credentials due to the national and international condemnations they obtained. However, on a positive note, the election led to a great deal of soul- searching among the Nigerian leadership. The President at that time, Umaru Musa Yar’dua, publicly acknowledged that

the elections, that brought him to office was fundamentally flawed. He therefore set up the Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) to suggest measures that could improve the conduct of elections restore electoral integrity and strengthen democracy in Nigeria. Some of the ERC's suggestions were re-evaluated and approved as improvement to the Constitution and Electoral Act. The government also tried to reinstate the truthfulness of elections in the country by appointing trustworthy leader to run the INEC. All these measures added to the relative success of the 2011 and 2015 general elections.

Language plays important roles in human thoughts and perceptions. It is used to express attitude, emotion and the mental state of people before and after the 2015 Presidential the election results. Modality is an important category of Systemic Functional Linguistic which helps to identify the attitudes and values speakers or writers hold towards their subject matter. Fowler (1986) defines modality as:

the grammar of explicit comment the means by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth of the propositions they utter, and their views on the desirability or otherwise of the states of affairs referred to.

Modality helps to identify the value and attitude of individuals towards reality in the representation of the speaker's opinion on the election results. As part of the electioneering process, public opinion was expressed in the national newspapers in order to evaluate the election results as being free and fair or otherwise. These expressions were implemented in the component of modality.

Public opinions were divided on the validity or otherwise of the 2015 Nigeria's Presidential election, thereby yielding different viewpoints. These ranged from representing the election results as bias, or free and fair election. The study was, therefore, designed to investigate modality functions in the public opinion on the 2015 Nigeria's Presidential election results in the national newspaper. This is in order to establish how modals help to construct meaning which aids the understanding of public opinion on election results.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

Public opinions are distinct from ceremonial speeches, political campaign speeches, manifestoes, parliamentary debates, etc which have hitherto received extensive attention in systemic studies, by examining their language forms and functions. Studies in Nigerian political discourse have examined modality in debates and speeches with little attention paid to its functions in the diversity of public opinion on the 2015 Nigerian presidential election results in the Newspapers. Modality functions as a judgment of the truth about the 2015 Nigeria's Presidential election results, which differed from one person to another based on the political affiliation, attitudes, feelings, political interests and tribal background of the writers. No significant attention has been given with regard to modality functions of public opinions to determine its language form and function on the 2015 Presidential election results in Nigeria.

These modality functions featured in expressing public opinions in order to establish the feelings of the citizens towards the 2015 Presidential election results. They helped in evaluating the attitudes of Nigerians during and after the election process, the disposition of the out-going President and the in-coming President; and the opinions of the people as transmitted through the media.

Public opinions provide a rich pool for political discourse considerations. Public the opinions do not only reflect happenings in the society, they also shape happenings in the Nigerian society. The context of this study is therefore, political discourse. It captures the confidence of the people to freely express their views about the government and election processes in the country. This study, therefore, seeks to identify the modality functions in public opinion on the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results in the National newspapers and to determine how such modals actually or potentially express people's point of view on the 2015 Presidential election results in Nigeria. It is also against the background, that of all the other types of political discourses mentioned earlier, this modality function in public opinion on the 2015 Presidential election results in Nigeria is yet to receive a robust and systemic study. Thus, this study is an exploration into this supposedly new aspect of political discourse, to determine how modals help to construct meaning which aid the understanding of public opinion on election results in Nigeria.

1.3 Aim and objectives

The research aims at investigating modality functions in public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election results in the national newspapers. The endeavour of this study is to examine different modals that were used in the opinion of people towards the 2015 Presidential election results in Nigeria. The uses of different modal verbs have significant functions which it performs in the understanding of public opinions or reaction to the 2015 Presidential election results in Nigeria. The objectives are to:

- (a) identify and classify different public opinions on the 2015 Presidential elections results in selected newspapers;
- (b) identify and determine the forms and functions of modals in the representation of public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election results; and
- (c) explore how the modality helped to express public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election results in selected newspapers.

1.4 Research questions

To accomplish the above aim and objectives, the study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the different classifications of public opinions and perspectives identified the in selected newspaper?
2. What are the forms and functions of the modality choices used in expressing public opinion on the 2015 Presidential election results?
3. What function(s) does linguistic modality perform in political discourse?

1.5 Scope of the study

The study covers systemic functional linguistic analysis of Nigeria's Presidential election results. The opinions of Nigerians on the 2015 Presidential election results are cursorily identified and examined. Some modality features in the discourses of Nigerians who made comment(s) on the election's result in selected Nigerian Newspapers were collected and discussed. The data was purposively collected from five newspapers which publish vital content on public opinion. The newspapers were *The Nation*, *The*

Guardian, The Nigerian Tribune, Vanguard and The Punch; published between March and April 2015. The data was subjected to discourse analysis.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study explores how modalities are used to express public opinions in political discourse in Nigeria. It addresses political discourse in real life situation, how different forms and functions of linguistic modalities are used to account for implicit and explicit meaning and relevance utterances.

This study adds to our understanding of how modality helps the speaker(s) to use language as the vehicle for the expression of his/her comments, his attitudes, evaluations and also, the relationship that he/she sets up between himself/herself and his/her listeners, in particular. By studying the linguistic representations of public opinions on the 2015 Presidential elections in Nigerian print media, language users will understand beyond ordinary meaning modality functions in the representation of public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election results.

This study identifies linguistic modality, seeking to determine the linguistic devices that realise them and explaining how they relate to public opinions. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is therefore, a veritable model that helps to explicate the auxiliary and lexical modals of language elements to determine how they realise the public opinion being investigated, and how opinions equally contributes to our comprehension of these interactions. SFL is considered as the ideal model for investigating this study based on its functional disposition to language and its focus on context in its analyses, as these features will help to account for the language elements that construe the public opinion in texts. In doing this, the deliberate choice of modalities, lexical items and structures of language used in texts and how they contribute to meeting the set goals of the speaker were investigated. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is therefore a viable model of language that aids our investigation of the linguistic modality used in the representation of public opinions in 2015 Presidential election results in Nigeria. This study is of great relevance in the following ways:

-The study reveals modality choices used in political discourses

-We shall see the functions of modal verbs based on different perspectives and how they are explored to construct meaning which aids the understanding of public opinion on the 2015 Presidential election results in the national newspapers

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the underlying concepts of language and politics, media discourse and its relevance to the study. It serves as a precursor to the review of related and relevant literatures on media discourses, systemic functional grammar and public opinion. This gives an orientation to the study as one that is relevant to the discourse.

2.1 Language functions and the print media

This shows how language is employed to portray and explain how the actual world has a lot to do with linguistic representations. The application of language differs from one event to the other; therefore, combining the various functions that language use is open-ended and theoretically robust with series of choices in meaning. (Halliday 1975). The occasion in which language is employed depends on the user's choice in order to view or explain the actual world. Halliday notes three meta-functions of language: 'ideational', 'interpersonal' and 'textual'. The 'ideational' language functions deal with the 'content' of what is said. This gives the speaker the privilege to express his/her opinion of the concept of both the explicit and implicit world of his/her own consciousness. The world that is portrayed could be psychological, sociological or physiological world. The interpersonal function deals with the part of semantic system; it unveils the role of language as a medium through which a speaker involves in the speech event, such as negotiation among participants in discursive events and the disposition of the participants. The 'textual' function plays a role of incorporating the ideational and interpersonal functions to functional use, particularly in making or forming texts which could be in relation both logically and consistently. Inasmuch as these roles are demonstrated either with full awareness or lack of awareness in various words, the print media is not excluded. This is of huge concern to this work, that is, how language functions based on the guiding principle employed by various print media for a particular purpose. There is a significant level of interaction between the news producers in the print media and the public or those who consume the product (news), that is, the readers. Since the media are responsible to the society, they influence the masses through what

the readers read and the aftermath of the action of the media usually vested on the function of language.

2.2 The Nigerian press and democracy

There is a close relationship between the press and democracy, most importantly in Nigerian context. The basic function of the press in any democratic state is to encourage democratic principles which would help the people to trigger their political will and exercise their political power, (Ayedun – Aluma 1996). After the executive, legislature and judiciary arms of government, the Nigerian press is the only other organization whose role is clearly stated in the Nigerian Constitution. Chapter 2, Section 22 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria says:

The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people (FRN:1999)

Section 14 subsection (2) (a) of the Chapter declares that the autonomy belongs to the people of Nigeria, while the government's power to exercise authority is derived from the people. Also, people's involvement in the governmental system shall be done in line with the provision made by the constitution. These are the fundamental laws that the Nigerian press must put into consideration while discharging their duties. The Press is of great importance and an essential part of contemporary democracies with basic goals which include the provision of good governance sourced through intelligibility, reliability and sincerity.

Goje (2009) observes that the Nigerian press in our contemporary society serves as a link between the government and the populace, as well as stands in the frontline against the encroachment of basic democratic ideologies such as freedom, equality, law and justice. Swant (2000) believes that only if Nigerian citizens have sufficient and balanced information on all events that take place in the country, they might not be able to move ahead positively on such issues. Meanwhile, the press have become the backbone of the country by providing adequate information to the masses. People express their opinions via the mass media on radio, television, the internet and newspapers. Information from

the mass media enables Nigerian citizens to participate in the governance and policy making.

Melinda (2002) observes that the press is one of the dependable mediums for circulating ideas and information to the people in any democratic state. Akinterinwa (1999) is of the view that the press has a responsibility to monitor governance. Based on the authority the entity has to play a significant role in supporting and building the nation. He also ascertained a, the mass media should play an important role in gathering and disseminating information. They should also participate in mobilizing opinions and explaining to the people their legal rights and obligations in society. However, Ayedun- Aluma (1996) says that the Nigerian press must keep an eye on political advancements with a view to leading politicians toward general development. He noted that there would be a good relationship between the people and the press when the press performs its roles effectively. These projections also depend on the level of the people's political knowledge, which may be partisan, moderate, critical or otherwise.

2.3 Public opinion

Defining on public opinion is relevant to this study because reports on political issues such as election results are usually skewed towards specific views. Opinion can be described as the views of a specified population with good consideration on any matter of great significance to the populace. Doob (1943:35) says that 'public opinion refers to people's attitudes on an issue when they are members of the same social group'. Truman (1951: 220) notes that 'public opinions consist of the opinions of the aggregate of individuals making up the public under discussion'. This means that there is more to public opinion than just the congregation of a people sharing the same opinion on an issue. The opinions of individuals on contemporary often issues differ based on differences in ideological beliefs. A Controversial discourse might spur conflict if not handled carefully by those involved. On an issue the interested participant will be grouped into two or more opinions thereby giving occasion to opinions which are paradoxical or reciprocally restricted.

However, the quantity of opinions that can be eminent will be a function of attitude and the past experiences of the individuals who constitute the public, as well as the intricacies of the issue. An uncomplicated issue of importance to a harmonized public

will not breed the range of opinions created by more multifaceted issues. Hennessy (1985) believes that opinions have their origins in social relationships and that 'all government rest fundamentally on opinion rather than coercion'. He says that no government can ignore public opinion in its attempt to bring about the social change but that over time, government may significantly manipulate public opinion so that 'Nigerians become, in the long run, what the government makes them'. He observed that the mass media are a major determinants of on public opinions as they influence political decisions by giving or preserving publicity, occasional endorsements, and by presenting editorials that help people take informed decisions about issues. Hennessy (1985) notes that private opinion is found underneath public opinion but the expression of point of view on issues by a significant number of persons (what is being referred to a public opinion) is possible only if many individuals have preferences that they are willing to make public when necessary. Therefore, there is an interaction between public opinion and attitude. Hennessy (1985:314) says:

The study of opinion formation and attitude change is basic to an understanding of the public opinion process even though it should not be equated with the process. The public opinion process is one phase of the influencing of collective decisions, and its investigation involves knowledge of channels of communication, of the power structures of the society, of the character of the mass media, of the relation between elites, factions and masses, of the role formal and informal leaders, of the institutionalised access to officials.

Hennessy supposes that the raw material out of which public opinion develops is originated in the attitude of individuals, and that the nature of the attitudes within the personality and the processes which account for the attitude change are critical to the understanding of public opinion.

2.3.1 Politics, the media and the public sphere

Politics simply refers to the activities associated with government. It deals with the theory and practice of government, especially the activities associated with legislative and executive power, or dealing with the forming and running organizations connected with

government. It involves all the activities people engage in that is the struggle for and orientation of power. This includes all the communicative encounters that ensue in all activities involved. The relationship between the government and public is sustained through the activities of the mass media. They engage in the dissemination of information from the government to the people and vice versa as well as making the government policies known to the people through political interaction such as debate, interviews and manifestoes that hitherto characterise the genre of political discourse. Political interaction here is thus an interface of people or a group to deliberate on issues of socio-political interest relating to governance.

2.3.2 Discourse in the media

One of first set of researches which examined the language of media discourse (newspapers), was carried out by Crystal and Davy (1969). The research explored the language of news reporting on the axes of lexis, graphology and grammaticality of language use. It examines the unique function ascribed to punctuations. In some cases, it changes from everyday use or otherwise. It also viewed the irregularity in the alphabetical arrangement particularly used in showing differences in headlines from stories. At the grammaticality level, while it showcased the use of sentences which is applicable with the everyday use, it also observed that there are structural constructions that are not applicable. For example, the work established that reporters were used to using predicator + subject, which directs to another assertion of the work, that language use in news reporting in terms of theme displaces the SPCA structure. The work also specified in particular that the media preferred starting sentences with adverbials. However, regardless of the fact that the study introduced by researchers to media discourses, it was not a study on critical discourse and it did not make any attempt to think about the principles of any news channel, especially in relation to its language role.

Trew (1979) made impart in a great way to linguistic differences and the principle of disconformity in newspaper language. He proposed the creation of more progressive medium to separate basic principles in discourses to expand more components of the linguistic expressions that deal with newspapers and ideas to social procedure. Trew (1979) viewed various newspapers coverage of similar occurrence with a fixed focus on functional choices as motivated by Halliday's approach. One of his observations

astonished the display of processes and participants in British broadsheet and tabloid papers. Trew observed that the *Sun* used greater active participants, while the *Morning Star* had a tendency to showcase the processes without the participants.

Bell (1991) investigates media language. Bell significantly examines the invention procedure of news, the role of the listeners and the structure of news stories. In the study, he presents how 'popular' and 'quality' British newspapers differed in content and visual styles and in the use of language. He examines the deletion of determiners in appositional naming expressions in seven British newspapers which were published in 1980 and discovers that the 'quality' newspaper: *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph* obliterate little determiners, while the 'popular' ones, *The Daily Mail*, *The Express*, *The Mirror* and *The Sun* delete determiners to a large extent (Bell 1991: 107). His study, therefore, ascertains that the type of newspaper one reads is a determining factor in the use of specific linguistic qualities. This study does not only consider the use of determiners and modality functions, but also how different discourse and voices are selected by the media in order to achieve set ideological objectives.

Osisanwo (1991) carries out a study on the issue of bias in newspaper reporting and focuses on comparative analysis of news reporting. The study blends the stylistic framework posited by Crystal and Davy (1969) and Halliday (1973) to analyse four English newspapers. The study opines that 'where the reporters do not intend to deliberately distort news...he should be cautious in selecting and using some language features'. The comparison investigated in the study shows that there is BIAS in news reporting. This study however, does not centre on contrasting newspapers; but on how people express their opinions in the national newspapers.

Fairclough (1995) opines that the media do not logically develop or plan social events, but often time than not, replicate pre-invented ideologies. Ideology implies the philosophies which sturdily affect the way news writers write their stories. Hoffman (2007) views it as to what extent individuals comprehend the world in which we dwell and the comprehension cuts across an interaction between our psychology and the universal structures that surrounds us. Fairclough (1989) observes that some people adopt ideology to govern others through the convention of popular sense supposition, which people admit because the suppositions are embedded and so, are perceived as

social and predictable practices. Bell (1991) endeavours to analyse news media from the perspectives of linguistic and sociolinguistics so as to show case the socio-cultural analysis of the news media. He devotes no concentration to the socio-cultural context of language which shows the real meaning of texts.

van Dijk (1988) examines the analysis of media discourse from the part of discourse invention and intellectual capacity, which is context-reliant processing of documented and situational information. In this representation of cognitive interpretation of text, he supposes that as the reader comprehends, he triggers and acclimatizes or amends script information. His stand is that the function of scripts or related forms of awareness is imperative in how people digest information by non-attendance, and how readers create meaningful demonstration even when the text is only fragmentary. He attempts news text analysis and created dissimilarity between 'micro' and 'macro' formation of news discourses. The micro arrangement, which related to the general content of a text, is central to the thematic arrangement (Flairclough 1995). van Dijk had earlier disagreed that the understanding of discourse is importantly vital to personal model and goals, frames, script position or ideologies. van Dijk's cognitive form categorizes how news worth forms news coverage and how news reporters renovate texts received from other sources to make a report, his model still fails because it does not account for the interpersonal function of language. Moreover, texts are not analysed intertextually but rather linguistically (Flairclough (1995). In this study, both the interpersonal function of language and textuality are important to the analysis of data, as they help showcase how media language has been used to represent public opinions.

2.4 Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

Caffarel et al (2009) examine the ideology inherent in two French editorials using the Systemic Functional Theory. The study embarks on an investigation of evaluation properties and transitivity in the editorials of divergent political discourses. It of highlighted how ideology was interpreted by means of foregrounding particular patterns of linguistic choices. The study closely investigates the relationship between texts to suggest the ideology of each paper and to influence the reader to espouse its viewpoint on the event of the kidnapping of two French journalists in Iraq and on the action that should be taken. It revealed how linguistic devices presented by language, examined

through the interface of the Systemic Functional Linguistics, may provide a practicable framework for the analysis of ideology in the news media. Hasan's (1985) model of investigating semiotic system of verbal art, THEME, is used. This stage is reinterpreted as the stage where ideological meaning is produced from the impact of social and belief systems on linguistic choices. The paper comes to an end that ideology, world view and all cultural norms are involved in all linguistic processes. They are fashioned and reproduced in every social relationship in terms of authors, public and text in the context of situation. Individuals, community or class do not have a set of ideas i.e ideology, there might be different opinions outstanding in specific situations but such principles split culture-wide demonstration with other segments of the society.

Okpanachi (2009) did a discourse analysis of Obasanjo's address to Nigerians on the 8th October, 2003. The purpose of the study was to investigate the different linguistic approaches and the resources of language that were employed to create and classify the major participants, i.e. Olusegun Obasanjo and the leaders of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). The study adopted Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics to explain how the linguistic structures secrete the underlying ideology. The work aimed to show how the President brands the social actors and those that had the interest of the masses in mind. The study posited that Obasanjo used negative indexes to portray the actions and speeches of the NLC as villains of the people, while revealing himself and his government as loyal and winners of the interests of the populace. In order to point out the representations of the NLC leaders, the investigation devices of synonyms, markers of reversals and occurrences of strikes is used. Other signifiers revealed the pro-markers of cohesion and appeals to partisanship were used as a means of revealing himself and the masses. On the other hand, in framing the NLC, negative markers were used. The study remarks that the instance of power play between the President and the NLC was a good site for ideological investigation. The study is different from this very in terms of its choice of data. It is evident to state that this study has shown that political leaders use language to present themselves, their policies and activities as being people oriented, while those of other groups are regarded as anti-people. It also exclaims that language is a powerful tool in power play and relations.

Haig (2012) carried out a critical evaluation of the importance of ideology and principles on the creation, distribution and consumption of news and other forms of media

discourses. This was carried out from a linguistic principle. In examining this claim, it utilised the critical discourse analysis approach and Systemic Functional Linguistics theory, and the transitivity system, in shaping the set objectives of a media text regarding youth crimes. The article was purposely centred on the representation of social actors in media texts. The study suggested an inventive heuristic device for measuring the power with which, grammatically, social actors provide and demonstrate the device's relevance with respect to a scrupulous media text. The text selected for analysis is an excerpt from radio news bulletin. It paid close concentration to how the influence of excerpts can be recognized and analysed from linguistic or grammatical perspectives. The study critically noted the relevance of SFG and CDA in establishing the hierarchy of power consigned to participants and their ideologies. This provides a bound in our study using SFG as our theoretical framework. It helped to note how power roles allotted to participants are extracted from a media text. However, it varies in the sense that it used texts from a radio news bulletin (electronic media) while this study used texts from newspapers (print media).

Oha (1994) did a stylistic study to observe the language employed in war situation with particular emphasis on the war speeches of Yakubu Gowon and Emeka Ojukwu. According to Oha (1994:30), one of the dominants (if not measured as the most paramount systems) of communication in politics is language. In the study, Oha (1994:31) speculated that politics is representational and may be viewed as linguistic trend. Therefore, there is symbolic interrelatedness between politics and language or it can be said that language and politics are identical twins. He was of the opinion that power control underscores politics, based on that, it necessitated the dynamism of language (being control device of social behaviour) for survival.

In the quest to give an interrelated approach to his analysis, Oha sketched insights from pragmatics, semantics and discourse analysis. He took largely from Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. Basically, Oha adopted the framework of Systemiotics, which is described as a multi-level approach based on the SFG, where the interrelatedness between language and situation gives insights to a balanced analysis of events or reports (Oha 1994:81)

Oha's study (1994) is similar to our study in the choice of the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory. Despite this, Oha's approach differs from ours because he employs the Systemiotic aspect of the theory. In addition, he carries out stylistic analysis of war speeches while this study is only interested in the modality functions in the representation of public opinion on the 2015 Nigeria's Presidential election results in the national newspapers.

Oyeleye (1997) is another relevant work that is significant to the discourse studies. Oyeleye studied Soyinka's Telephone Conversation as a social discourse paying rapt attention to the properties of language with which Soyinka offered its significance. In order to justify the authenticity of the analysis, Oyeleye adopted Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic as – his analytical tool. In doing the pragmatic analysis, he incorporated a multi-dimensional approach. However, Oyeleye's work was poetic analysis and that makes it different from this present study which centres on public opinions in the media discourse on 2015 Presidential election results.

Ogunsiji (2001) is related to this present study. He carried out linguistic stylistic study of Soyinka's works with a combination of the insight of literary and linguistic stylistics. Just like the present study, Ogunsiji made rigorous endeavours at using the Systemic Functional Linguistic model to carry out comprehensive analysis. Ogunsiji investigated Soyinka's division and structuring of his works, specifically, his fictional texts *Ake*, *Isara*, and *Ibadan* on the phonographic, grammatical and lexico-semantic levels. Ogunsiji's work was armoured by its focus on meaning –generating process. However, Ogunsiji's work is organised to account for meaning by adopting the three metafunctions of language: he identified collocation, register, field, code-mixing, code-switching, naming and nicknaming, linguistic borrowing, translation and linguistic tools in Soyinka's work. His study is different from this present study because we are neither working on Soyinka nor examining literary texts, but modality functions in public opinion on the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results in the national newspapers.

2.5 Theoretical perspective

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as championed by Halliday is a linguistic model of meaningful choices rather than formal rules in communicative events. SFG explains the principles of natural language as a system of systems, describes the system in relation to

instances of use. SFG further presupposes that language is closely related to the demand speakers make on it, thus viewing language as functional and situational. This entails that the functions of language, the entire meaning component and the context of the language event are brought to focus; as such, language function determines the structure of the language.

This study in identifying modality functions in public opinion on the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results in the National newspaper. The study seeks to determine the linguistic devices that realize them and how they all relate to modality function. SFG is therefore a veritable model that will help us to expound the grammatical and lexical aspects of language elements to determine how the realization of the opinions being investigated and how public opinions equally contribute to our comprehension of the main discursive issues of the point of view. SFG is considered as the right model of study based on its functional disposition to language and its focus on context as these features help us to account for the language elements that construe the discourse strategies in texts. The aspect of the theory relevant will be highlighted further here.

SFG as a model, views language as a network of systems of meaning and the process of using language as a semiotic process in which people convey meaning by the linguistic choices they make. A system in this case, as Halliday (1985) views it, is a set of linguistic choices available in a specific environment based on the context in which the language is being used. Linguistic system offers language users multiple choices with which to create meaning. This is because with every context, there are a number of meanings a language user might express using varied words to express the meaning, and taking into consideration other factors such as the audience; the setting, the goal and purpose of the discourse etc. to make such choices. As a model that takes choice and structure into consideration, SFG thus accounts for what is termed the paradigmatic relations of system and the syntagmatic relations of structure and sequence in interactive events. In doing this, we investigated the deliberate choices people make as we consider the lexical items and structures of language texts to determine the modality choices and how they contribute to meeting the set goals of language users. SFG is a viable model of language that aids our investigation of the modality functions in representing public opinion on the 2015 Presidential election results in Nigeria, which this study undertakes.

Another reason for the choice of SFG in this study, is its provision to account for the relationship between language use and context, something that some theories overlook. To Halliday, language is evolved to satisfy human needs and the way it is organised, it is functional in order to meet those needs (Halliday 1985). This will, therefore, help us in bringing out the overt and implied meaning and strategies used in texts, based on their peculiar context. This is because language is a social activity, with social functions and it is construed in linguistic system, and the patterns of language used in every social context reflect the function the language is performing in such context. SFG therefore, renders itself relevant to our study of modality function in public opinions in the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results in the national newspapers as these forms of opinions have their peculiar contexts, goals and orientations.

From the foregoing, we understand that SFG is concerned with the correlation between the linguistic outputs of language used, its social context to derive meaning and the functions sets to achieve in an interactive event. SFG thus, enables a lexico- grammatical examination of the features of texts in this study, in order to determine how discourse strategies are realized in text and their functions. This, in Halliday's view, entails that meaning emerges from a seamless interface between words and contexts, which deals with linguistic description structure, to interpret meaning, SFG thus accounts for the interpretation of meaning from linguistic forms in texts, and the socio-contextual meaning in expressing modality functions in representing public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election results in Nigeria.

To realise all the gains of SFG as noted above, we adopt Halliday's (1985) broad classification of language functions as he categorise them into three meta-functions- the ideational,(or representational)function, which enables one to express his interpretation of the world as experienced; while the interpersonal function enables one to interact with others so as to bring about change in the environment; and the textual function, which enables one to organise one's message in a way that makes the representation and interaction cohere.

The applicability of SFG model is based on its functional basis which proves to be insightful to our investigation of modality functions in public opinions on 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results in the national newspapers, that helps to relate the various

patterns of language use at the grammatical and lexical levels that realize modality functions and relate them to the public opinions and meanings of the texts. The analysis is based on the ideational interactive encounters – interpersonal relations, through the meta-functions expressed via the grammatical theory of mood and modality.

2.6 Mood and Modality

The mood system is one of the propositions of Systemic Functional Linguistics (i.e. the interpersonal metafunction of language), which has been adopted for the present study. It facilitates our ability to account for the various options that are available to the speaker in the use of language (Osisanwo, 2003). The interpersonal function of language manifests in the structure of the clause through the system of mood, which defines the grammatical subject. The options in the mood system are declarative, interrogative and imperative, and the system is carried by the finite element of the verb plus one nominal, which is the grammatical subject. According to Alo (1998:55),

The clause, the example, may be to approve or disapprove, to express doubt, to ask questions or give answer; to greet, to instruct, to command others; to include others within the social group or to exclude others from it. These various uses or functions of the sentence correspond to grammatical categories which are called declarative (statement sentence): imperative (commands, requests) and exclamatory (exclamation)

In its interpersonal function, as an interactive event, an exchange between speakers, the clause in English is organised in terms of the mood system. Hence, mood is the relationship between the grammatical subject of the clause and the finite element of the verbal group, with the remainder of the clause called the residue.

According to Halliday (2000:359), modality comprises four sub-systems that expresses probabilities (i.e. certain, probable, possible), usuality (i.e. always, usual, sometimes), obligation (i.e. required, supposed, allowed), and inclination (i.e. determined, keen, willing). There are two types of modalities. Epistemic modality and deontic modality. Epistemic modality is concerned with the degree of validity, probability or certainty that a speaker attaches to his propositions or observations. In deontic modality, focus is on the ‘degree of willingness to do or give’ (Opara, 2005)

The system of modality according to Morley (1985:64) handles the scale of probability from possibility to certainty. It is an important linguistic tool for realizing the interpersonal function and expressing social roles between the speaker / writer and the hearer/ reader, (Halliday 1994). He notes that modality elements are expressed by a variety of syntactic forms: Verbal, adverbial, adjectival and nominal. The verbal elements are the modal auxiliaries such as may, might, can, could, will, would, ought to, must, need etc. They can be realised through adverbs such as maybe, certainly, definitely, probably; adjectives such as certain, possible, obvious; and nominals such as possibility, chance, likelihood etc. There are degrees of certainty, probability, or obligation in modal operators respectively. They are called values, and these can be classified into high, median and low values, (Halliday 1994:362).

Mood literally implies a state of mind in which one's emotion or set of emotion has ascendancy. Honbry (1974) defines mood as a 'state of mind or spirit; while Crystal (1980) sees it as 'a range of attitudes which can be expressed by mood system'. Mood is the major interpersonal system of the clause. It gives the requirement needed in conversation with the resources for providing or requesting a product (which can be information or services), in other words, with the resources for enacting speech function (Halliday 1994:97).

2.6.1 Modality

Modality as a linguistic device encompasses a variety of forms, including (but not limited to) modal auxiliaries, modal verbs, modal adverbs and modal adjectives. There are grammatical modality and lexical modality. Modality is generally defined as the grammaticalisation of a speaker's attitude and opinions. This position is further corroborated by Palmer (1986:14) who describes it as the expression of the speaker's attitude or opinion regarding 'the contents of the sentence. Lyons (1977 : 542) sees it as the expression of the speaker's attitude or opinion regarding 'the proposition that sentence expresses'. Thus, modality may be regarded as the grammar of explicit comment (Simpson 2004:124).

Modality performs interpersonal functions and expresses the opinions of a speaker, shows his attitude and reveals his evaluation of a situation (Fowler 1986; 1991). He says that the speaker makes use of language in means of expressing his feelings in the speech event, the relationship that he sets up between himself and his listener, the communication role that he adopts of informing, questioning, greeting, persuading etc (Fowler1991). These are modal auxiliaries; modal adverbs (e.g. probably, surely); evaluative adjectives and adverbs (e.g cowardly, regrettably); verbs of knowledge prediction and evaluation (e.g. it is a truth universally acknowledged that ...). Fairclough (1995b) observes that the linguistic systems of mood and modality which are concerned respectively with clause and sentence types, and the position of the writer about the message, are directly connected to the interpersonal function of language.

Modality, according to Fairclough, shows the degree of affinity with, or commitment to, a proposition expressed by a writer. Halliday (2004) perceives modality as a resource which creates a semantic space between positive and negative poles. He also relates modality to propositions, arguing that in a proposition, the meaning of the positive and negative pole is assertive and denying. There are two kinds of immediate possibilities, he says namely: (i) degree of probability and the degree of usuality. Examples of the degree of probability are: *possibly, probably, certainly*, while examples of degree of usuality are: *sometimes, usually, and always*. The degree of probability means either 'yes' or 'no' with different degrees of likelihood, whereas the degrees of probability means either 'yes' or 'no' with different degrees of oftenness attached. For example, between the positive pole: 'John will go' and 'John will not go' are possibilities such as 'John may go', 'John can go', 'John must go' and so on. These intermediate degrees are known as MODALITY. He identifies five types of modality as *usuality, probability, obligation, inclination* and *ability*. Usuality could mean either 'yes' or 'no' with different degrees of oftenness attached. It can be expressed (a) by a finite modal operator; (b) by a modal adjunct and; (c) by a modal adjunct of probability and usuality.

Probability is another intermediate possibility between the positive and negative poles. It is equivalent to either 'yes' or 'no' or 'maybe no' with varying degrees of likelihood attached. Probability too can be expressed (a) by a finite modal operator; (b) by a modal adjunct and; (c) by both combined. Halliday says that an immediate possibility between positive and negative poles is represented by various degrees of inclination in an offer. These are: 'willing to/ anxious to/determined to' and they are expressed (a) by a finite modal operator or (b) by an expansion of the operator. *Ability* has the potential form *can*, that is, 'have the ability to' and goes with 'know how to'. It is an intermediary between *has done*, *has to do* and *trying hard to do*. Its negative form is *avoid*, *avoid doing fail in doing*

Disjunct is also found within the context of modality which performs interpersonal functions (Fowler 1986: 131-132). It expresses comments of a speaker, shows his attitude and reveals his evaluation of a situation (Fowler 1991). Fowler (1986) identifies certain linguistic means of expressing modality and they include modal and sentence adverbs (such as 'probability' and 'surely') and evaluative adverbs (such as 'fortunately' and 'regrettably'). There are two types of adjuncts: style disjunct and attitudinal disjunct. Style disjunct conveys the speaker's comment on the form of what he says, 'defining in some way under what condition he is speaking while attitudinal disjunct comments on the communication' (Quirk and Greenbaum 1982: 242)

Halliday concludes that it is these scales of probability and usuality to which modality belong.

...In a statement, the modality is an expression of the speaker's opinion: 'that will be John'; whereas in a question, it is a request for the listener's opinion: 'will that be John?' 'Is that John do you think?'...even a high value modal (certainty, always) is less determinate than a polar form: 'that's certainly John' is less certain than 'that's John' (Halliday 2004: 147).

Nunn (2007) says that news writers use modality to articulate their level of loyalty to the reliability of the information or confirmation that other people utter which they

merely report. She argues that modality can be one means of indicating a writer's ideological point of view.

Therefore, modality is viewed as a major exponent of the interpersonal function of language. It can be said that language is not merely used for conveying factual information; a writer may wish to indicate the degree of certainty with which he makes a statement, or try to influence others in various ways, exercise authority or signal submission to somebody else's authority, give permission or ask for permission, make people do things or prevent them from doing things. As such, modality covers all semantic categories underlying all these uses of language. There are different categories of modalities: deontic modality epistemic modality and boulamic modality.

Deontic modality: This is a modal system that is associated with duty and concerns itself with the writer's attitude towards an obligation. It is a system that is highly related to the strategies of social interaction, especially with tactics of persuasion and politeness

Epistemic modality: This refers to the judgments about possibility or probability in the sense that something is or is not the case. The paper focuses on Halliday's categorisation which reveals writers' attitudes to the 2015 Nigeria's Presidential election results. Mood is a grammatical notion, whereas modality is a semantic notion relating to such concepts as 'possibility', 'obligation' 'permission' and 'necessity'. Traditionally, modality is said to be implemented grammatically through three moods namely indicative, imperative and subjective. These three moods are then implemented as verbs inflections.

2.7 Related literature on critical discourse analysis

Koller's (2005) study reconciles two different but related approaches to media discourse critical discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics with particular interest in metaphor research. This is applied to media discourses concerning mergers and acquisitions. She notes that there exists compatibility between the two approaches but there have been scarce efforts to discuss metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This article takes up the concept of social cognition and argues that it

serves as a means of organizing the modifications of and access to cognitive resources with metaphoric models playing a particular salient role in the construction of ideology. It displays how a particular discourse concentrates on an ideologically assigned metaphoric model of evolution to the fact that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is interested and motivated by pressing social issues and the ways discourse serve to constitute, negotiate and subvert such issues while cognitive linguistic focuses on the human natural make-up as it impacts on language and cognition. However, cognitive linguistics had paid little attention to the socio-cultural situations of cognition or its link to discourse. Koller (2005: 201) posits that social cognitive serves as the interface between conceptual models especially metaphorical on one hand and discourse on the other. The study reveals that media discourse concerning mergers and acquisitions is very much characterised by a selectively used cluster of fighting, mating and feeding metaphors which combine into a scenario of evolutionary struggle. The study also notes that companies involved in merger and acquisition are metaphorically represented as living organisms subjected to the natural forces of evolutionary struggle. The study observes that the persuasiveness of the metaphor betrays the ideological agenda it helps to establishes. It was noticed that all three metaphors centre on aggressive movement, the goal of which is extinction of rivals by various means. It concludes that being exposed to such a metaphorical based discourse will (re) produce the mental models held by discourse participants.

The study is of interest in that it shows how metaphoric can be constructed in media discourse and relating to actual situations of human evolutionary struggle. The study opens up novel arms of discourse and the uses media discourse can be put into with other approaches such as conceptual metaphor theory other than Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) which this takes into its analysis.

Lagonikos (2005) studies the role of the media in shaping ideologies in the reportage of the events of September 11, 2001, in the United State of America. The focus of this study is on the editorials of newspapers after the events. The choice of the editorials is premised on the fact that many turned to media organisations for a full interpretation of the attack and editorials do not only report the news event but also interpret them as a result, ideologies and opinions are mapped out either explicitly or implicitly. The

editorials were drawn from different newspapers across different continents, America, Europe (Britain) and African (South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe). The text was analysed using the Critical Discourse Analysis approach with grammatical insights from systemic functional grammar and appraisals. The study investigates the representation and evaluation of social actors, events and the schematic structure of the editorials. Through the descriptive, interpretative and explanative methods of the editorials and the events, the discourse identified the interest of who is being presented and how each text position readers' attitudes and opinions. The analysis reveals that the editorials distinguished between the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy for the purpose of advancing, and reveals that the process and conditions surrounding the production of the editorials show how they are significantly influenced and constrained by the ideologies of the writer, the media organisation and the situational context. The schematic structure reveals a consistent use of a three part structure by which editorial opinions are evaluated. The study counsels that students should be equipped with analytical tools such as CAD, SFG and appraisal methods in order to critically analyse and discover how languages are used to promote ideologies in the editorials of newspapers. The mode to promote ideologies in the editorials of newspapers and the mode of data analysis is similar to this study and the choice of the text is from a type of media discourse. It is, however, in variance with this in the sense that it uses editorials as its text, while this work is based on news reports. Nonetheless, it contributes to knowledge about the different ideologies from different media groups in selected countries about the September 11 attacks.

Taiwo (2007) examines the languages, ideology and power relation in Nigerian newspapers headlines. He employs a Critical Discourse Analysis approach in determining the peculiarity of rhetorical devices underlying the ideologies in the headlines. He state that the comprehension of a text extends beyond the known and familiar fields of grammar, semantics, and morphology. He notes that the rhetorical intent, audience, and the world view about the writer and the audience are key elements that must be taken into consideration. As a result of increased attention on critical approaches to texts, language does not only reflect reality, it is a crucial tool in creating reality. Reality, expressed through language carries the power that shows the interest of the writer or speaker and audience or reader. Illustrating from headlines derived from national tabloids, the work investigates language use in the news headlines and serves as

pointers to specific ideologies and power relations. He observes their make-up usually evoke the emotions of the readers. Headlines are used as a method of evaluating and presenting the feeling, opinions and attitudes of people about important issue in the news. The study shows that beyond the rhetorical and graphological devices used in newspaper headlines, there are inherent ideological meanings. It also reveals that ideological meanings are clear expressions of the representation of headlines are used to intimate, sustain and shape discourse on the view of readers on national issues. While the study is insightful, its focus is on media discourse and it uses CDA as its theoretical approach, which is related to this study. However, the point of divergence is that while it examines the headlines of newspapers, this study focuses on news articles about a particular issue to be analysed from a modality point of view.

Igwebuike (2008) studies the language and ideology in selected open letters to President Olusegun Obasanjo. The principles of Critical Discourse Analysis were used as an approach to unravel the ideologies in the letters. The study specifically investigates the distinctive features and style employed by the writers of the open letters to the president. It equally attempted to examine the lexical and semantic import of the choice made and how these choices convey the different beliefs. The study also explores the use of specific lexical relations and how they are used to enhance the linguistic decoding of ideals in the open letters. The study emphasises a link between linguistic choice and political ideology, the fundamental socio-political issues are important factors in the way in which language is used. The choice of words reveals that it captures the plight of the masses and they are socio-politically conscious of their environment. The significance of the study to this work is that, is its data of discourse springs from the same source print media. Conversely, this study differs in that Igwebuike (2008) investigates ideology in open letters; ours studies the modality functions of public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election in National newspapers.

Cutier et al (2009) perform an empirical analysis of media discourse on information technology. The authors examined articles in newspapers and other related sources. A total of 173 articles and related materials were sampled using Critical Discourse Analysis approach. To illustrate the approach using CDA, the paper analysed a Canadian technology project, the Acadia Advantages (AA). The different sections outline key

concepts and principles from Habermas Critical theory of communication. It employs a combined approach of CDA and content analysis technique note of the syntactic, grammatical patterns and metaphors etc. It underscores the view that a CDA approach cannot alone inform critical social analysis, this, they embrace a multiple method with critical theory of communication. The analysis reveals the use of rhetorical strategies in repeating specific opinions. The texts were reactions to disclose implied or explicit validity claims. The overwhelming use of positive adjectives and metaphors suggest that regardless of the argumentation, the positive aspects of the programs are reinforced through the use of language with positive connotation. This work has been very insightful as it gives new areas where CDA can be utilized such as the introduction of new information technology system in the Acadia University. What is important is that these issues are still drawn on politics such as creating a divide between the powerful, the less powerful, inequality, and domination. A major challenge of the paper stems from the fact that it was unable to infer recipient responses in order to investigate pragmatic effect of communication. The import of the study on this work is its use of media discourse from a critical theory of communication while ours uses aspect of Systemic Functional Linguistic as its complement. It equally expounds the different approaches that CDA and other methods used to investigate power relations.

Faremi- Tunde (2010) looks at a Critical Discourse Analysis of a selected Newspaper editorial on the Niger Delta issues. The data was purposively selected editorials in three Nigerian's newspapers. *The Guardian*, *The punch* and *The Nigerian Tribune* with focus on editorials. He examines the power relation concerning issues related to the Niger Delta using a critical discourse analytical approach drawn from the socio-cognitive view point. The study employed a descriptive and analytical method to account for subtle meanings. Also, the discourse properties using the socio-cognitive approach were drawn on; reflects ideological positions of the selected newspapers. Based on this, the study was able to outline the different issues as it relates to the Niger-Delta discourse. The study investigates the editorials comments on one of the crucial issues in Nigerian political scene from a CDA perspective, while this work centres on modality function in the representation of public opinion on the 2015 Presidential election results from systemic functional linguistics perspective

Sunday (2009) is another related study. It adopts CDA and gathers its data from *The Guardian* newspaper. The study examines the display of ideology by the Nigerian judiciary. It looks at the function of the judiciary in regulating and deepening the nation's democracy. In contextualising its opinion, it investigates the Nigerian election petition tribunal ruling by the Gubernatorial Election Tribunal in Osun State, Southwest Nigeria. It opines that by this form of ruling, the judges hassle the superiority of the judiciary over other arms of government and they emphasize the position of the authorized specialists. It agrees that the ideologies of the judiciary were represented through grammatical voices, modifiers and imagery. The link between the study and this present work is the choice of newspaper as the source of data collection (*Guardian*) and emphasis on Nigerian elections. While Sunday's (2009) adopts CDA as the theoretical framework, this study adopts SFG as its theoretical framework with attention paid to linguistic modality functions in the representation of public opinions on the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results in national newspapers.

Ayoola (2010) investigates the uses of language in presenting the conflict situation in Niger-Delta. It examines the presentation of ideological perspectives on the Niger-Delta discourse in Nigerian Newspapers. The study employed a critical discourse analytical framework. It proves that the Niger-Delta issue has become very crucial in Nigeria as it deals with issues such as oil exploration, exploitation, oil bunkering, and environmental degradation, under development, negligence, resource control and in most recent time, militancy. Consequently, there have been agitations from different quarters and this has generated public pronouncements in a manner that promotes two perspectives: the positive and the negative. The issue in the Niger-Delta is one with such a complex discourse trapped in different ideological perspectives. The choice of these papers are based on their long period of existence in Nigeria before 1999, dedicated regular columns to Niger-delta news and their high level of professionalism and objectivity; while the choice of the dailies give the stipulated time scope when the data was gathered. Niger-Delta discourse is one that had been in the print media before 1999 and is still being reported in various mediums. Hence, the time limit of the sampled data is one of the short comings of the study. Notwithstanding, it focuses on the ideological perspectives of the different reports given as it relates to the discourse; it draws insights from the different perspectives in the Niger-Delta discourse as represented in the print

media. The study demonstrates the use of power by dominant groups, the government, by elections, the militants, by arms and weapons; civil society groups and organisation, by media usage and advocacies. It also shows the group of the dominated and the power relations that exist between the different people involved in the Niger-Delta discourse. The study is related to ours in terms of the genre of discourse analysed and the choice of the theoretical framework. It differs in the different issues discussed, while our study aims at studying public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election results; Ayoola (2010) examines a Niger-Delta discourse. The study does not sample the linguistic devices that serve as clues or guidelines to these ideologies. The data was analysed as one done in other disciplines other than language or linguistics. This draws attention to the point noted by van Dijk (1998) that critical discourse analysis is multidisciplinary in nature and each discipline using this approach must incorporate theoretical frameworks that relates to such discipline.

Osisanwo (2011) studies linguistic properties adopted in the Nigeria's 2003 and 2007 general elections. He pays close attention to the ways in which the cover stories of two magazines in Nigeria, *Tell* and *the News* illustrate through linguistic and visual forms, the ideological quest of social actors in the 2003 and 2007 elections in Nigeria. The study employs a combined approach to Fairclough and van Dijk's models to Critical Discourse Analysis. These models are complemented with Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. Leeuwen's representation and interaction theory on reading images served as the theoretical framework. The magazines used linguistic tools to present their ideological attachment about the elections in Nigeria as 'a dirty game' by the insincerity of politicians. Also, lexical devices such as affixation, blending, compounding etc were used to represent the social actors depending on their actions and reactions other linguistic items revealed in the study include such tactics as lexicalization, intertextuality, normalisation, active and passive clauses, relational and material transitivity, paratactic and hypotactic clauses. All these were used as means of deriving the ideologies expounded by the social actors. The study concluded that through the linguistic patterns and visual strategies, ideology plays a fundamental role in the propagation and perpetuation of implicit and dominant ideologies.

The study is related to this because it analyses both visual and linguistics analysis. It also uses data from the print media, magazines, which differs from this study which uses newspaper articles. The study reveals the different actions and the power play in the electoral processes in Nigeria.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has given insights into what constitutes media discourse. It pays attention to the fact that it can be analysed as texts and contains ideological backgrounds of public opinions. It also reviewed related literatures on media discourse and Systemic Functional Grammar. These literatures are significant to this research as a result of their insights to the major areas of discussion that cuts across the choice of data and the theoretical framework adopted for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section describes the various steps adopted in carrying out this research. It discusses the pilot study and its relevance to the present study. It focuses on the sources of texts, and methods of gathering the texts, and how data were extracted from the texts and used in this study. This section also considers how selection was made from the corpus of texts to arrive at those chosen for use in this study. The methods of investigating the data collected are also highlighted and the methods of analysis identified. There is then the presentation of data in quantitative and a qualitative basis.

3.1 Pilot study

Prior to this study, a pilot study was carried out; it was entitled 'linguistic modality in the representation of public opinions on the Presidential election results in Nigeria'. The study investigated public opinions in five Nigerian newspapers: *The Punch, Nigerian Tribune, Vanguard, The Nation and The Guardian* and it brought significant insight to the present study the pilot study among other things helped to bring research potential to the present study. Some of the significant findings and relevance the pilot study brought to this study include forms and function of linguistic modalities used in the discursive issues on the presidential election results.

The pilot study proved highly advantageous as it brought out the possible challenge that would have debarred the progress of this study.

3.2 Sources of data

Data for this study were sourced from the soft and hard copies of five print newspapers: *The Punch, Nigerian Tribune, The Guardian, Vanguard and The Nation*. The choice of these newspapers was because they are the most authoritative on national issues and are widely read newspapers in Nigeria. They were also significant based on their prominence in the history of the Nigerian socio-political development and the Nigerian media industry. The appropriateness of this selection resulted from the interests in examining, as fully as possible, the opinions of various social actors on the issues concerning the

2015 Presidential election in Nigeria. The newspapers were published between March and April 2015, which was the most eventful political period of election results declaration for the March 2015 general elections in Nigeria. The public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election results were basically those of major political parties: Peoples' Democratic Party and All Progressive Congress sponsored by the parties themselves or by the various associations, which identified with the parties and congratulated their political aspirants. The data would therefore to be analysed using aspects of the Systemic Functional Linguistics, specifically with relation to the interpersonal metafunction.

3.2.1 Newspaper Profile

3.2.2 *The Punch*

The Punch is an independent newspaper published in Lagos since 1977. This paper is produced in hardcopies and online versions, which covers: politics, business, sports, stockmarket, polls and cartoons. The online address is <http://www.punching.com/>. The newspaper was founded and owned by Olubunmi Adeoderin with a goal to sustain an equitable stand on all issues but remain people-oriented in approach. It has observed, however, that the paper has been pro-south in the events that covers. Despite the regional stance, *The Punch* had, on two occasions, been given awards of the most widely read newspaper in Nigeria by the Nigerian Media Merit Award NMMA, a certified professional entity which annually gives award of excellent performance to qualified journalists and media houses in the country. The paper also comprises vivacious political pages which reside on political news, activities of the political leaders seeking discretionary offices, programmes of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, which is the organisation constitutionally sanctioned to systematize and carry out electoral process in the country. The first page of the paper portrays breaking news on political events, which often captivates the readers' attention.

3.2.3 *Nigerian Tribune*

The Nigerian Tribune, published by the African Press Limited, was founded by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in 1949, with the intention of serving as the mouthpiece of the South-west. It further added to its roles of promulgating the political activities of its founder, Chief Awolowo, as well as those of the Action Group, his political party. Writing on the Ibadan-supported newspaper, Oduwole (1989) says that the newspaper has a

responsibility to provide right to all hues of opinions representing various interests in society and give a perspective that will correspond to the curiosity of the preponderance of the superlative concern of society. The newspaper has an online version or address that is, [www.tribune @ yahoo.com.ng](mailto:www.tribune@yahoo.com.ng).

3.2.4 *The Nation*

The Nation newspaper is a private newspaper that is owned by Bola Ahmed Tinubu. It is based in Lagos and Nigeria, and has been in circulation since 2007. *The Nation* newspaper has an online edition with the address thenationlineng.net. There are instances of ownership influence in the editorial contents especially when publishing events that affect the party formerly known as ACN, but later changed to APC, the political party of its founder. The newspaper's editorial content overtly gives it out not only as a South-Western Nigeria newspaper, but also as an APC newspaper which meagrely features activities of other political parties, especially constructive ones. The newspaper's strongest point is its academic analysis of issues relating to governance.

3.2.5 *The Guardian*

The Guardian is a private owned daily newspaper that has been publishing from Lagos since 1983 by Alex Ibru from Delta State, Nigeria. This newspaper has both print and electronic versions with the address: http://www.ngrguardian_news.com/. It is Tagged; 'The flagship of the Nigerian print media'. *The Guardian* has an editorial guiding principle which emphasises on adequate coverage of events in all regions of the country, whether rural or urban. The motto of the newspaper is 'conscience nurtured by truth', adapted from the popular saying of Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1816) which reads, 'Conscience is an open wound, only truth can heal it' The Guardian has an energetic political desk which maintains at least a page, daily, on political news. The page is known as 'Policy and Political News', features stories that centres on the conducts of political parties, proletarian campaigns, people's feedback to party agenda and activities, their prospects from the parties in government and a congregation of other things related to politics.

3.2.6 *Vanguard*

Nigerian Vanguard newspaper was established in 1983, but started paper production in 1984 with the objective to 'serve in the vanguard of a better life for the people of

Nigeria'. It was initially a Sunday newspaper, but commenced daily production shortly afterwards. The publisher is Sam Amuka Pemu (aka Sad Sam), a former reporter with the Daily Times. At the inception, it gained popularity as a reputable newspaper and it now has distribution centres in practically all the state capitals. It brings a refreshingly different style to news coverage and also strives to maintain excellent service by utilizing the best media technologies.

3.3 The present research

The present study explored Nigerian political discourses particularly with reference to public opinions from the online and print media on the 2015 Nigerian general elections. Following the conduct of the pilot study and the findings from it, which featured linguistic modality in the presentations of public opinions on Nigerian Presidential elections, which are aspects of political discourses, the keenness for this research was activate. Thus, the context of modality functions in the representation of public opinions was used to analyse the text.

3.3.1 All Progressive Congress (APC)

The All Progressive Congress came into existence on 6th February, 2013, with a view of becoming a very strong opposition party in the country. The party was formed as a result of the coming together of other parties such as Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and a part of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) and part of the party (APC).

On 31 July, 2013, an endorsement was given to the party by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to become a recognised political party in Nigeria, while the license of existence was removed from other parties (the ACN, CPC and ANPP). Susequently, following the trend of events in the country, it was observed that some people left their original political parties to join the APC. Prior to the advent of APC political party in Ngeria, Muhammadu Buhari had contested and lost at three consecutive elections (2003, 2007 and 2011) for the post of President of the country.

In terms of economic rating, the APC is considered to be a political party that has good economic policies and plays a powerful role in regulating government policies. Also,

most of the APC's supporters emerged from the South-west and the Northern part of the country, which have the largest population in the country. The party is considered to be dominated by older generation of people in the country, thus it is regarded as a conservative party due to the set of people that dominate the political party.

3.3.2 People's Democratic Party (PDP)

The People's Democratic Party is a main existing political party in Nigeria. Its policies generally lie in the direction of centre-right of the political system. The party was established in August 1998. The first Presidential candidate was the former military leader in person of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo. Alhaji Atiku Abubakar was his running mate in February 1999. The pronouncement that the military administration would be terminated by 1999 after ruling the country for sixteen years led to the formation of the political party. This political party has a wide political base, and also encourages economic deregulation.

During the 1999 elections, the PDP's candidate in person of Olusegun Obasanjo emerged as the President. The PDP ruled the country for sixteen uninterrupted years. The purpose of forming the party was to improve the economy of the country and to establish a free democratic environment that would ensure equity, justice and equal privileges among the citizens.

Contextual factors of texts adopted for use in this study are public opinions in selected *The Nigerian Tribune*, *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *The Guardian* and *Vanguard*. Discourse as linguistic method of study investigates different types of modalities used in the representations of public opinion in the political discourse. Therefore, the text adopted for use in this study is written and visual text, considered to have element of organization and unity and are brought under a closer examination to determine their forms and functions.

3.4 Procedures for data analysis

This section addresses the various methods that were used to investigate each research question in this study.

3.4.1 Research question 1:

3.4.2 What are the different opinions and perspectives identified in the texts?

3.4.3 Method of investigation

Public opinions based on various grounds of argument by each speaker in the text were extracted using Systemic Functional Grammar and grouped under suitable sub-headings. The modality choices employed by these speakers to express their opinions about the 2015 Presidential election were examined and analysed. Therefore, collective evaluations expressed by people on political issues, policies or persons are examined based on their ideology.

3.4.4 Research question 2:

3.4.5 What are the forms and functions of modality choices employed in the discourse of public opinion on the election results?

3.4.6 Method of Investigation

This research question was analysed using content analysis. Data were identified in the texts through modal auxiliary choices such as ‘must’, ‘will’ ‘should’, and ‘would’.

Halliday’s SFG posits that whereas in its experiential meaning, language is a way of reflecting experience and reality, on the other hand, in its interpersonal meaning language as a way of linguistic modality, becomes an authentic instrument that can help to measure the attitudes of the electorate and elections after result declarations. In linguistics, modals are verbal expressions associated with such notions as possibility, commitment and necessity (for example, ‘can’, ‘must’, ‘will’ ‘ought’). These auxiliary verbs could be used in assuring and promising citizens about ambitions during elections and result declarations

3.4.7 Research question 3:

3.4.8 What function(s) does linguistic modality perform in political discourse?

3.4.9 Method of investigation

Data relating to this research, question was analysed using semantic analysis of the modality choices identified in texts. Modality features are analysed, looking at the form and functions that each linguistic modality performs in the texts.

Linguistic modality is well-rooted in the interpersonal and interactional use of language. In Hallidayan linguistics “language performed simultaneously three meta-functions: ideational, interpersonal and textual” (Fowler, 1991:69; Halliday, 1994). Modality is part of the interpersonal function. Here, the speaker uses language as the expression of his commitments, his attitudes and evaluations and also the relationship that he sets up between himself and others. The researcher investigated how epistemic modality is normally used to express the speaker’s attitude to propositions. Also, the researcher examined the function(s) of deontic modality which is concerned with both the speaker’s attitude and his or her active participation in events. Therefore, considers such functions as giving permission, performing an obligation or giving and making promises.

CHAPTER FOUR

RERESSENTATION OF PUBLIC OPINIONS AND MODALITY FUNCTIONS ON THE 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of data based on theoretical and analytical framework discussed in chapter three. The public opinion which constitute our data about the 2015 Presidential election results, are analysed based on modality functions. The study will consider the different opinion grounds identified in the text. After which, the study will investigate different forms and functions of linguistic modalities identified in the text.

4.1 Representation of opinions on three perspectives of argument in the election result (OER)

The election results in Nigeria have been represented in different ways by different opinion writers from the feature articles sampled from selected newspapers. The opinions are divided into the acceptance or otherwise of the 2015 Nigeria's Presidential election, yielding eight different viewpoints. These ranged from presenting the election results as bias, free and fair election, God's will for Nigerians, opinions that represent deserved victory for Buhari, opinions on peace and unity ground, opinions that represent Jonathan's sportsmanship and historic victory under three broad perspectives namely: nationalistic, moralistic and historical.

4.1.1 Nationalistic perspective

Nationalism is germane to this study in the sense that it points at the common interests of a group of people that share a similar language, hail from the same historical background, and share mutual knowledge of their immediate environment. This group of people share a similar ideological belief and are guided by fundamental principles, which can be termed as constitutional law that is compiled in a book for reference purposes. The set goal of these people is to work harmoniously in order to boost the economic strength and moral standard of their community and bring sanctity into the system. A nation kicks against self-interest in order to avoid unhealthy rivalry and conflict among the people. Nationalism is centered on loyalty and commitment to the nation-state which

must over-rule individualism or group interests. Nationalism is said to seek after maintenance and development of national identity based on common interests like: cultural background, mutual language shared, geographical location, religious affiliation, political goals or a belief in common pedigree. In a nutshell, nationalism aims at promoting the nation's traditional belief and custom, encourage a sense of belonging to the idea of patriotism. In conclusion, nationalism, points at the general belief that a state or nation should be in-charge of governmental system and all means of production. The opinions on national ground are discussed below:

4.1.1.1 Opinion showing peace and unity perspective

After the President-elect had received the certificate of return, he assured President Jonathan that he had nothing to fear, despite their different views on governance. He should put aside the rancour of the election; the President-elect extended a hand of friendship and conciliation to President Jonathan and his team. The President-elect clearly stated that he harbours no ill will against anyone.

Excerpt 1:

Let us put the past, especially the recent past, behind us. we **must** forget our old battles and past grievance and learn to forge ahead. I **assure** you that our government is one that **will** listen to and embrace all.

The Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015.

In excerpt 1, the two opposition parties APC and PDP have fought severely to attain the post; especially, Buhari and Jonathan have been on the energy-sapping politics for a very long period of time. Buhari was of the opinion that for peace and tranquillity to be obtainable in the country, people must learn to live above the past. The speaker used strong modal auxiliary verb 'must' to indicate how compulsory it is for Nigerians to forget about the past in order to maintain peace and harmony in the country. He also employed the use of lexical modality 'assure' and deontic modality 'will' to suggest certainty of good governance. There are some lexical items such as 'battles' and 'grievance' that supported the existence of political acrimony between the two

contestants' parties in the past. While the lexical item 'forget' is used to depict urgent need for reconciliation and unity among them.

Excerpt 2:

...You have instructively **shown** that politics **should** not divide us as a nation and as a people, that it **should** be a **unifying** force in our drive for genuine nationhood.

The Guardian April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 3:

I **commend** all Nigerians for the great sacrifice they made during the election. Their **peaceful** conduct throughout the duration of the election was significant in the entire process. You are the true winner.

The Punch, April 2, 2015.

In the above excerpts, the wife of late Chief Obafemi Awololwo was of the opinion that politics should be a unifying factor in any nation rather than causing chaos or political discrimination among the politicians. The speaker used an adverb 'instructively' to reflect the attitude of the incumbent president about the election. It is not a game of do or die but a game of luck. People should be allowed to demonstrate their right and when this is done, the incumbent president should not use his vantage position to manipulate the election results. Nigerians were glad when the election results were announced because they felt that their franchise as citizens had been fully exercised during the last concluded election. The lexical modal verb 'commend' is used to express the speaker's point of view on the election process. The election was the first in the political history that an incumbent president would have handed over power to an opponent.

Excerpt 4:

... I **shall** treat everyone of you as my own. I **shall** work for those who voted for me as well as those who voted against me and even for those who did not vote at all. We all live under **one name as one nation: we are all Nigerians.**

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

In the above extract, the speaker informs his audience about the purpose of his assumption of power. The President-elect opined that in order to make good success in his government, there is a need to extend love and concern to all Nigerians. There cannot be any record of unity where there is no mutual love, care and concern about the well-being of the people. He sees his call as a call to serve and not to be served. He promised never to discriminate among the people and not to be bias or be in favour of his political members. It is obvious that when there is inequality in discharging his duties among the governed definitely, there will be grudges held against one another and it can lead to rancour in the state(s). He emphasised the fact that we are all Nigerians, we are one and we are under one name as one nation therefore, there should be evidence of unity among the people living in the country.

Also, the international observers made their opinion known on how imperative it was for Nigerians to see the just concluded election as a unifying factor that will enhance stable economic progression, political stability and effective administration in the country. The United State President expressed his opinions in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 5:

I urge President-elect Buhari and President Jonathan to **respect** their **calls** to their supporters to continue to respect the election outcomes, focus on **unifying** the country, and together lead Nigeria through a **peaceful** transition.

The Punch, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 6:

.Nigerians came together to decide the future of their country **peacefully**.

The Nation, April 1, 2015.

The international observers encourage the President and the President-elect to do more in their efforts at building a virile nation. The speaker implied that Nigeria has political problems. He has equally reviewed, assessed and evaluated the political systems. The above utterances are to let the hearers prepare their minds for the introduction and acceptance of democratic system of government that would guarantee stability in the country. Considering the context of the utterance, the speaker believes that the introduction of democratic system of government is imperative so that the country could achieve its goal politically and economically. The out-going President made his opinion known about election's results in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 7:

Jonathan said although some people have expressed mixed feelings about the results announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission, those who might feel aggrieved **should** follow due process based on the constitution and electoral law in seeking redress.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

The out- going president was able to convince Nigerians that the blood of Nigerians does not worth the electoral process. President Jonathan used strong obligatory modality 'should' to enlighten Nigerians to reject the election result in a manner that will not disrupt the peoples' desire for democracy in the country. He made Nigerians to realize that, anyone that displays rowdy behaviour does it at his/her own detriment. Therefore, it is mandatory to go through what is written in the constitution and electoral rule.

Excerpt 8:

Nigerians **needed to** not only
reject violence but actually promote **unity**.

The Guardian, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 9:

Abubakar, **urged** the President's supporters not to heat up the polity but follow the president's sterling leadership quality and his commitment to the **unity and oneness** of the country.

The Nation, April 2, 2015

The United State Secretary of State, John Kerry had noted that elections in Nigeria have always been attributed to violence and disorderliness in the country, but, the last concluded election went on smoothly. The speaker was of the opinion that Nigerians must totally reject violence during the conduct of election in the country. He emphasised the need to promote unity in the country. Also, General Abdusalami Abubakar, former Chief of General Staff (CGS) admonished the President's supporters not to disrupt the decorum or standard that the out-going President has set-up rather, they (in-coming government) should build on the foundation which, will foster stable government and unify the country.

4.1.2 Historical perspective

Historical perspective in Nigeria's political system is of good significance to this study, it provides vital information about the past political administration that is, systematically written as sequential account of political events in Nigeria. Considering the historical perspectives of the political trend in Nigeria, history helps us to have deep knowledge of how politics is operated in the past, which presents insight into the mistakes made by past administrations, provides better understanding of the present and lay down a guiding principle for the future.

Democratic system of government commenced fully in 1999 after the tenure of General Abusallam elapsed. Nigeria is a heterogenous country with four geographical regions that is, Northern region, Sothern region, Western region and Eastern region. Each was able to provide aspirants from different domain. Eventually, President Olusegun Obasanjo emerged as the winner under the PDP –political party. This party was in power for sixteen consecutive years. Each attempt made by the opposition parties to transfuse power proved abortive. In the political history of electoral process in Nigeria, politics has been characterised by violence, rigging, disorderliness and blood shed. Since 1999, it has

been one party system in the country. But, the 2015 Presidential election broke the gene and it was highly surprising that the incumbent President could hand over power to an opposition party. It was stated that Nigerians have demonstrated high level of political maturity in the last concluded election in Nigeria.

It must be stated that, 2015 Presidential election was peaceful and people were given high sense of belonging in the political system. Qualified Nigerians were opportuned to exercise their franchise in the country not only that, the idea of rigging the election results by the party in power was eradicated to a reasonable level. Peoples' votes really counted in determining the next political leader (President) in the country.

4.1.2.1 Opinions of people on the election result as historic victory (OPERHV)

Excerpt 10:

History **will** remember him for his political maturity.

The Punch April 1, 2015

In most cases, people at the corridor of power usually find it difficult to hand over power despite the fact that they are no longer qualified to occupy the office. But, President Good Luck Jonathan had promised that he would vacate the office if he was declared as a loser of the election. In the political history of Nigeria, he would be the first incumbent President since 1999 to hand over to the opposition party. The strong form of auxiliary modality 'will' is used as an obligation on the peoples' part to make reference to his political maturity and how he left the office with his full prestige.

Excerpt 11:

The APC also **confirmed** the Historical call.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

The attitudinal behaviour of Goodluck Jonathan gladdened the hearts of Nigerians, because he was able to maintain peace and orderliness in the country. If he had refused to allow the opposition party to emerge as the winner, innocent blood would have been shed. That singular action made Nigerians to give credence to his administration. The

lexical verb 'confirmed' is used to indicate that the opposition party also attested to the incumbent President's maturity.

Excerpt 12:

I **congratulate** Nigerians for this **historic** election in which an incumbent government at Federal level has been voted out of office through a free and fair election.

Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015.

The lexical verbs 'congratulate' is used to express a heart of gratitude to Nigerians. The last concluded Presidential election had been said to be free and fair by most Nigerians. The election process was regarded as being free and fair because people's vote has voted out the incumbent President out of office.

Excerpt 13:

This **could** as well be the purpose for which God has sent Jonathan to us at this time and I dare say this man has fulfilled that purpose and **history will** never forget him.

Nigerian Tribune April, 2, 2015

The incumbent President was regarded as God sent because his failure to vacate the office could have resulted in blood shed in the country. He was able to design this purpose and walk in the direction. The auxiliary modal verbs 'could' is employed to reflect a weak form which does not actually reflect a certainty of the assumption and 'will' is used as a strong auxiliary verb to depict an obligation on the Nigerian citizenry never to forget the role played by the incumbent President.

Excerpt 14:

Despite the many criticisms of his government, Mr President **will** go down in **history** as a leader who kept his word by willingly giving up power when he lost an election in a democratic process.

The Punch, April 2, 2015.

In a democratic system of government criticism is a yardstick for a good governance. In spite of these criticisms both constructive and destructive forms, he was able to perform excellently well. The modal auxiliary ‘will’ is used to depict strong use of certainty that the President would leave the office without a hitch of disgrace or disappointment.

Excerpt 15

The fact that the people’s voice was heard through their votes is such a huge deal given our **history** and I **believe** this is the beginning of greater thing to come for the country.

Vanguard, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 16:

To many Nigerians, March 28, 2015, **will** eternally ring true as the day they voted out an incumbent President the first time in the **Nigerian history**.

The Guardian, April 2, 2015.

The lexical modality ‘believe’ is used to expound high level of trust people have in the in-coming President. In any democratic system of government election is the only means through which, the people’s opinions about the administrative prowess of a leader could be judged, especially in a free and fair atmosphere. In excerpt 16, the epistemic modality ‘will’ is used to make reference to the 2015 Presidential election that would forever be in memorial.

Excerpt 17:

Jonathan's historic concession has ensured
that he **will** have power in a blaze of glory.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 18:

The 2015 Presidential election **will go down history**
as the most keenly contested election.

The Punch, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 19:

Yes! **History will** not forget those who **should** be
agents of change.

Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015.

The modal auxiliary is used to express probability. The incumbent President had made up his mind on the election. He never saw it as a do or die affair, in case he loses he would not hesitate to go back to Otuoke his home town. The speaker made reference to the Ex-President's proposition and in the speaker's opinion he was showing gratitude to him based on his credible moral standard.

In the above excerpts, Nigerians saw the victory as historic one because the process has been declared peaceful and the people came out in mass to vote for their desired candidate. The president displayed high level of maturity by calling the newly elected president to congratulate him on his success. In the history of democracy in Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan was the first president to hand over government peacefully without shedding the blood of the innocent Nigerians, Okupe (PDP member) said, the ex-President fulfilled the promise he made to Nigerian through his action. The writer presents the election results as historic victory. It was stated that Nigerians have demonstrated high level of political maturity in the last concluded election in the country.

The above excerpts indicate affirmative statements that attested to the good leadership quality of the Ex-President. The Ex-President was celebrated at the same pace with the

in-coming President. Ordinarily, he ought to vacate the office with sober reflection or as a loser but, in his case; he left the office with full ego of political victory and showers of praise from both young and old people in the country.

4.1.3 Moralistic perspective

Moralistic perspective of the 2015 Presidential election results is imperative to this study. It portrays the Ex-President (Goodluck Jonathan) as a man of high moral standard, decent and of good sense of judgment. He was attributed with fairness to God and humanity. Politics in Nigeria has been characterised by corrupt leaders and power tusslers. Despite the fact that he was at the vantage position to rig the election results, and create a tensed environment for the citizens, he didn't allow external forces to control his high moral standard. The Ex-President was able to judge between good and bad, his action and attitude to the election results portrayed him as a good leader that is worthy of emulation.

In a democratic setting, peoples' opinions are given an ultimatum priority over the governmental system, which aids constructive criticism that characterise a good government. An individual is given the privilege to exhibit his/her moral standard. Politics is determined by the public, a good policy that affects the people cannot be successfully implemented without consulting the public for their view about the issue.

Morality is highly important in electing a leader; he/she must be able to handle critical issues of life properly, without any iota of being biased or sentimental in his/her discharge of duties. Some of the opinions on moral ground supported the fact that President Goodluck Jonathan exhibited a high degree of political maturity by handing over the post peacefully without any form of chaos in the country. The public opinion on morality ground includes the following:

4.1.3.1 Opinion of people on the election results on moralistic perspective and the use of lexical and modal auxiliary verbs.

Excerpt 20:

For the out-going President, Dr. GoodLuck Jonathan, he remains a hero for his magnanimity in defeat and the uncommon grace and nobility exhibited by him by the way of conceding that he lost the election and even calling the President-elect to **congratulate** him.”

Punch April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 21:

President GoodLuck Jonathan **should** be **commended** for rising up to the occasion as a statesman by **congratulating** General Muhammadu Buhari, winner of the 2015 Presidential elections, even before the final declarations of results by INEC.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

The lexical modal verb ‘congratulate’ is used in the above sentences to depict the level of the Ex-President’s maturity in handling political issue at that most critical state in the country. If he were to be a power tussle, he wouldn’t have succumbed to defeat easily. Nevertheless, he did not allow the post he was occupying to control him. This singular action made him to remain a hero. In excerpt 21, the modal auxiliary ‘should’ is used to reflect weak obligation, that Nigerians should appreciate the good moral standard exhibited by the Ex-President with the use of lexical modal verb ‘commended’ this is used to reflect possibility. Nigerians are expected to show appreciation towards the good disposition of the Ex-President after the declaration of the election. The obligation is not binding but a matter of choice.

Excerpt 22:

Hand writings on the wall. Who **can** tell whom exactly the Sultan is begging to accept defeat? I guess Sultan **knows** Jonathan has no problem accepting defeat. But Buhari **will** never agree, hence **will** cause monkeys and baboons to be soaked in blood.

e-Guardian April 1, 2015.

In the political history in Nigeria, since 1999 it has been a very rare event for the incumbent President to subject himself to defeat, when he has the ultimate power to protest against the result declared by INEC if it does not favour his government. Also, prior to the election, Sultan was trying to persuade the two aspirants who emerged from the two prominent parties in the country (PDP and APC) to allow peace to reign in the country. The modal auxiliary ‘can’ to pose rhetorical question to the masses about the temperament of the two politicians. The epistemic modal verb is deployed by the speaker to express probability on the aspirants’ part. The speaker went further to argue out his point of view that the Sultan had confidence in Jonathan with the use of lexical modal verb ‘knows’ to buttress his opinion that he has no problem if he loses the election, he would accept his fate. But, in the case of Buhari he used (will + never) to negate the level of Buhari’s tolerance if he should lose the election. He was ready to shed innocent blood to mount power. The speaker concluded by using deontic modal auxiliary verb ‘will’ a strong form to express the havoc that Buhari’s defeat would have cost Nigerians.

Excerpt 23:

President Jonathan’s immediate reaction and the goodwill messages from other APC political rivals **will** help to deepen democracy in the country.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 24:

Both men **should** hug (again), smile for the cameras and tell their followers election is not war.

Nigerian Tribune, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 25:

We **thank** God Almighty for this day and I **praise** President Goodluck Jonathan for his magnanimity. I **can assure** him that the nation **will** remember him in kindness and goodness.

The Guardian April 1, 2015.

The positive reaction of Goodluck Jonathan triggered most Nigerian to appreciate his attitude towards the election results. The two parties actually celebrated each other and brought back the real motive of a good democratic system into the country. The modal auxiliary 'will' is used to indicate strong form that affirms that good foundation for democracy has been laid in Nigeria. In expressing the public opinion, the speaker employed the modal auxiliary 'should' to praise their positive disposition to the election result that, Nigerians should not view the election period as a time to raise alarm or fight one another in the country rather it should reunite everyone involved in the political system in the country. Also, lexical auxiliary 'thank' is used to appreciate God who is known as the giver of peace, while 'praise' is another lexical verb that is used to express gratitude to the incumbent President for his magnanimity. The both modal auxiliary 'can' and lexical 'assure' modalities are used while expressing the public opinion to indicate possibility and certainty. The modal auxiliary 'will' is used as a strong form to indicate obligation on the party of the citizenry to always remember the goodwill of the Ex-President towards the country.

Excerpt 26:

Akin Alao has *also* **commended** President Jonathan for what he **described** as a statemanly decision to concede victory to Buhari and for **congratulating** the APC candidate.

The Guardian, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 27:

He **saluted** Jonathan for creating an enabling environment and a wonderful legacy for the first time that brought about victory for the opponent

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

In the opinion of the speaker above, he was able to use lexical modal verbs such as; ‘commended’ and ‘described’ as a means of rating the high moral value of the Ex-President to concede defeat even when he has the privilege of protesting or disrupting the election process by seeking redress. The speaker went ahead to use lexical modal verb ‘saluted’ to hail the good mind of the Ex-President to create a conducive environment for Nigerians. As a matter of fact, if the aftermath of the election results had gone beyond control the poor masses would have suffered the consequences.

Excerpt 28:

The President has created an environment for amity that **would** create a good working relationship with in-coming President Buhari.

The Guardian April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 29:

Jonathan’s decision had **saved** the country from violence and instability that **could possibly** greet a hard-line decision to do otherwise.

The Nation April 2, 2015.

From the above excerpt, the modal auxiliary ‘would’ which demonstrated possibility is employed to describe President Goodluck Jonathan as a man of peace, who created an enabling environment for the incoming President. He willingly handed-over power to the opposition party. In excerpt 29, the positive attitude displayed by President Jonathan prevented acrimony and distability that might have erupted in the country. The lexical modal ‘saved’ and modal auxiliary ‘would’ are used to express the speaker’s opinion about the good nature of the out-going President to defeat in the 2015 Presidential election results.

Another important figure in the electoral process that exhibited good serenity during the collation of the election was Attahiru Jega the Independent National Electoral

Commission (INEC) Chairman. Professor Jega who made Nigerians proud by the way he carried the election process and ended peacefully in the tensed atmosphere. The below excerpts are used to support the moral standard of the INEC chairman.

Excerpt 30:

Jega was able to sail through because of his principled character and sincerity. A characterless INEC chairman **would** have bungled the election and plunged the nation into chaos. Jega **saved** us from that crisis.

Vanguard, April 2, 2015

Excerpt 31:

First of all, it **would** be a criminal offence not to acknowledge the efforts of Prof. Attahiru Jega, the chairman of the independent National Electoral Commission. His commitment to ensuring that the election was free, fair and credible is worthy of praise.

The Guardian, April 7, 2015

Excerpt 32:

I can go on and on about the qualities of this fine gentleman whose calm mien and character I fell in love with, and whom we have to **thank** for not subverting the will of the people in spite of the pressures he faced,... Posterity **will** surely remember Jega for good.

The Guardian, April 7, 2015

In excerpt 30, the modal auxiliary verb 'would' is a medial-strong form, which is used to commend the effort of Jega in conducting a free and fair Presidential election in the country. Some PDP members made effort to disrupt the electoral process, yet he never allowed Orubebe's negative attitude to debar him from observing good serenity in the country.

In excerpt 31, Jega's ability to control the situation was highly commendable all through the electoral process he did not appear bothered by the situation around him even when it seemed unpalatable. On no occasion did he look ruffled, even when he was verbally attacked in public by Godsdan Orubebe during the election collation in Abuja. The speaker employed epistemic modality 'would' to depict the gravity of his offence if he

failed to acknowledge the effort of Prof. Attahiru Jega to attain a free, fair and credible election in the country.

In excerpt 32, the lexical modality ‘thank’ is used to appreciate the noble character of the INEC chairman despite the fact that pressure was placed on him, yet, he did not misbehave. He was able to absorb the pressure and control his mood in order for peace to reign in the country. The speaker concluded that future generation would remember his outstanding character, of course, it is a general belief that ‘one good turn deserves another’ the unborn generation will be told of his good behavioural qualities. The use of ‘will’ above indicates political will and obligation on the part of Nigerians. The modal ‘will’ as it is used here with the adverb ‘surely’ shows certainty or assurance of what is capable of happening in the future.

4.2 Modality in the representation of opinions

Some of the declarative sentences show the mood and the attitude of the writers towards the 2015 Presidential election results in Nigeria. While some express the necessity of what should be done by Nigerians and other persons involved, others express the events that can occur. Some of these are exemplified below through the use of modal finite auxiliaries. The finite modal auxiliaries are discussed below;

4.2.1 Deontic modality expressing Volition

Volition implies the power to choose or decide to do something without being forced to do it.

Excerpt 33:

Gen. Buhari’s victory **will** make Nigerians work again, rekindle hope and bring succour to the long-suffering masses.

The Punch, April 1, 2015

Excerpt 34:

Our party **will** not discriminate against any Nigerians on the basis of religion, region, ethnicity or gender.

Vanguard, April 2, 2015

Excerpt 35:

Boko Haram **will** soon know the strength of our collective will and commitment.

The Punch, April, 2, 2015

In political discourses, most politicians give assurance to the masses to perform beyond their expectations by providing them with their basic needs and making life bearable for the poor masses. Modality is mostly employed by the politicians to reveal their strong-will or intention to cooperate with the people in the country and stoop so low in order to satisfy them. Some modal items are used to foreground this. This public opinions are particularly found in the *Punch Newspaper* and *The Nation*. The excerpts above reveal this:

In the excerpts 33 & 34 above, deontic modality are used to indicate the strong will of both the President elect and his supporters, that his regime will put an end to the long-sufferings of the poor masses. It is obvious that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society with a multi-religious setting, despite these differences; the president assured Nigerians that there won't be discrimination in the country. In excerpt 35, the deontic modality 'will' is an indication that the president elect is ready to put an end to the Boko Haram in the country. He gives assurance to Nigerians that everybody is going to work harmoniously in order to fight against this group. This intimidation from *Boko Haram* are almost deteriorate Nigerians' situation, the terror of Boko Haram terrorists made life very hard for Nigerians particularly in the North eastern part of the country through senseless attacks. Based on this factor, the elected President emphasized the potency of joint effort in fighting the *Boko Haram* sect.

Excerpt 36:

As the President, Nigeria **will** no doubt get a true and selfless leadership.

The Nation, April, 1 2015.

Excerpt 37:

APC **will** be a good octopus that will start from every aspect.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Also, in excerpt 36, Oshiomhole in his own opinion, emphasized the fact that they will get a true and selfless leadership. The use of ‘will’ shows a high degree of confidence in the President-elect that he will perform more than his predecessors by serving the people selflessly. While Asiwaju Bola Tinubu made pronouncements that gives certainty to the promises made by the President - elect, that, he would lead the people aright. The use of the modal element ‘will’ in excerpt 37 above shows strong obligation on the part of the President to perform up to the expectation of Nigerians. He gave credence to the President-elect as somebody that is competent to lead the country to her promised land.

Excerpt 38:

Change has finally come to the country because APC government **will faithfully** serve Nigerians.

The Nation, 3, 2015.

Excerpt 39:

They have made up their minds no amount of distributed largesse **will** change their minds.

Vanguard April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 40:

Buhari **‘ll** redeem his promises to Nigerians

Nigerian Tribunes, April 2, 2015.

In political discourses, most politicians give assurance to the masses to perform beyond their expectations by providing them with their basic needs and makes life beareable for the poor masses. Modality is mostly employed by the politicians to reaveal their strong-will or intention to cooperate with the people in the country and to stoop so low in order to satisfy them.

In excerpt 39, the speaker was being objective in his opinion with the use of deontic modal verbs ‘will’ which is employed to counter negative attitude of Nigerians in deciding whom would paddle the boat for four years in the country. Often than not, Nigerians are fond of

engaging in the business of ‘seeing and buying’ policy instead of exercising their fundamental human rights. Politicians that have failed in discharging their social responsibilities to the poor masses during the first tenure of office would still campaign for second term. In this case, Nigerians voted for their conscience without giving room for deceit from any aspirant(s). The strong modal verb ‘will’ is used to indicate the collective realization of ‘politicking’ being practised in the country. In excerpt 40, the modal auxiliary ‘will’ is binding. It is compulsory for the in-coming President to fulfill all the promises he made to the citizenry during his campaigns.

4.2.2. Opinions that represents social obligation and the use of deontic modality ‘will’

Excerpt 41:

A change from a government that had divided the country along ethnic, religious and regional lines to a government that **will** unite, unify and bond all Nigeria.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 42:

Change from a government that has no answer to the collapsing economy... to a government that **will** revive the economy, create employment and empower the masses.

The Punch, April 1, 2015.

The repetition of the word ‘change’ in the above excerpts denotes that the incoming President from All Peoples’ Congress has innovative ideas that would boost the country’s economy and bring oneness to the nation. Each geo-political zone has its own peculiarity; Boko –Haram insurgency is threatening people’s lives in the North, militancy is prevailing in the South- south, while kidnappers are rampant in the South-west. The modality ‘will’ is used in the above texts as an obligation on the part of the in-coming President to face the huge task ahead of him with good courage and to ensure that Nigerians love one another, tolerate themselves irrespective of their background. The in-coming President is also obliged to provide employment for the youths because a jobless hand is an instrument for the devil. It is of great necessity for

the in-coming President to empower the masses in order to create a good atmosphere in the country.

Excerpt 43:

They said Buhari's leadership **will** engender the process of giving Nigeria a new direction.

Vanguard, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 44:

I **will** continue to do my best at the helm of the national affairs to the end of my tenure.

The Nation April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 45:

Gen Buhari **will** make Nigeria work again, rekindle hope and bring succor to the long-suffering masses.

e- Guardian, April 2, 2015.

In the above excerpts, 'will' is used as a strong form of modality that reflects possibility of futuristic event. From the above opinion, the speaker believes that the administration of Buhari would provide solution to all the economic needs of the people. The speaker has the strong opinion in the competence of the in-coming administration that it would reform the country, stabilise the economy that was assumed to have being bastardised by the previous administration. In excerpt 41, the speaker is being assertive in his appraisal of the in-coming President he believes that the out-going President has divided the country based on individual's ethnic groups.

The speaker used strong deontic modality to establish the competence of the in-coming President in uniting the country. Also, excerpt 42, laid much importance on 'change' being the logo of the party (APC). The 'change' referred to is a positive pointer to economic development, political stability and security of lives and properties. The speaker adopted strong deontic modality to castigate the out-going President. From excerpts (43-45), the speaker viewed the in-coming President as being competent to handle the needs of the people in the country. The President is portrayed by the speaker

as being dutiful and having good charisma that would trigger the people in the country to work efficiently.

4.2.3 Deontic modality showing Condemnation

Condemnation is an expression of very strong disapproval of someone's action or something. Especially something that is morally wrong. Different linguistic modalities are used to express people's disapproval of the outgoing government.

Excerpt 46:

They (South- West) have made up their minds no amount of distributed largesse **will** change their minds.

Punch, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 47:

A change from a government that had divided the country along ethnic, religious and regional lines to a government that **will** unite, unify and bond all Nigerians.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 48:

Change from government that has no answer to the collapsing economy...to a government that **will** revive the economy, create employment and empower the masses.

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 49:

Nigerians yearned for a government that **will** stop the mindless looting of our common patrimony.

The Guardian, April 2, 2015.

In excerpts (46-49), the modality 'will' is used by Afenifere's Deputy Leader Senator Ayo Fasanmi so as to condemn the act of buying people's votes. Those from South West had a strong determination for the party they wished to vote for, not minding the materials and money distributed to them. He proceeded to condemn the act of mismanaging the national resources by the outgoing government and emphasized much on the project that the incoming government will embark upon. The economic situation

of the country was at the verge of total failure; the speaker believes that the newly elected president would resuscitate the country's economy create employment opportunities for the masses and provide empowerment programmes.

Our natural resources have been politicised, money realised from these mineral resources are shared by our so called 'leaders'. Unfortunately, they fail to invest the money in Nigeria, they preferred to take the loot out of the country and become foreign investors. The mineral resources are supposed to serve as a benefit to every Nigerian, but, the politics practised for the past sixteen (16) years has been a self-centred system of government.

Therefore, the speaker was of the opinion that Nigerians yearned for a government that will stop the act of looting our common inheritance. The collapsing economy will be revived by the incoming President, whom the APC members saw as the 'Messiah' of this generation.

In the Nigeria's political history, 2015 was the first time that all tribes in the country jointly voted out the incumbent President and voted in the candidate of their choice based on this fact, the President-elect celebrated through out the country

4.3 Epistemic Modality that represents praise

Praise: These are words that are said or written to appreciate someone or something. It can be used when the action displayed by someone is pleasant. The excerpts below reflect this:

Excerpt 50:

History **will** remember him for political maturity.

Punch, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 51:

That is one legacy I **will** like to see endure.

Guardian, April 2, 2015.

In Nigeria's political history, there hasn't been any political leader that was willing to hand over power to his opponent, even Obasanjo, despite the fact that he stayed for eight uninterrupted years in the office, he still went ahead to propose third term agenda which was not supported by Nigerians. But, in the case of GoodLuck Jonathan, he was the first incumbent President to unseat and accept defeat willingly by congratulating his opponent before the final declaration of the election results. The attitude displayed by the president reflected his high level of political maturity. He sees it as a legacy that all politicians should imbibe. In excerpt 50, the epistemic auxiliary modal verbs 'will' is used to reflect strong certainty that he would be remembered for his political loyalty. Also, in excerpt 51, the deontic modality 'will' is used to depict necessity. The ultimate achievement of the President-elect must be given a maximum protection.

4.4 Opinions that represent the election results as being biased and the use of 'will', 'would' and 'shall'

Excerpt 52: You are partial we **will** not take it from you.

Excerpt 53: We **will** not allow it.

Excerpt 54: This is already printed by Jega and the APC, we **will** not take it.

Excerpt 55: The PDP, in the statement noticed some irregularities in the conduct of the election which **would** be channelled through appropriate quarters.

Excerpt 56: We **shall** channel our profound respect for the rule of law and democratic ethos.

Punch, April 2, 2015.

These excerpts capture the worrying nature of Orubebe as supported by his negative disposition to the election results. To some of them, the image of the worried minister may bring to their consciousness questions like; why is he desperate to win the election for his political party?. Could it be because of his 'love' for his political father or tribal man? Or because of some hidden agenda, especially whether there are things to be covered up in Aso Rock Villa from other Nigerians?.The strong modal verb with the negation form 'will not' is used to reflect the outright rejection of the election results.

Excerpt 57: We **will** not continue with you.

Vanguard, April 2, 2015

Excerpt 58: That is our stand we **will** not continue.

The Nigerian Tribune April 3, 2015

Excerpt 59: We **will** not continue with you until you do something to our letter
The way you did to the APC.

The Nation April 2, 2015

The deontic modals used in the text by the speaker reveals his negative disposition towards the election results, the moment Orubebe noticed that APC was leading in the election result, he became unnecessarily furious and started displaying political immaturity at the collation centre. His intention was to cause a total disruption in the collation centre, for few minutes he performed a drama that created negative impression in the minds of the viewers. The modal ‘will’ used by the speaker signalled optimism and rejection of the election results ‘will’ indicates some objection to the progress of the election results. He used weak form of deontic modal ‘shall’, but ‘will’ was predominantly used by the speaker in the text

Excerpt 60:

Mr President has acted true to character because he is humble man and a statesman, but the PDP **will** deliberate on the outcome of the election if it is clear that the APC has manipulated itself into power through the activities of a man **called** Jega.

The Guardian April 1, 2015.

Considering the excerpt above, the members of the PDP members felt that the INEC chairman Jega, had manipulated the election results but none of the political members could single handedly revolt against the INEC declaration since they did not have the

support of the incumbent President, who was in the best position to take the election results to Tribunal for thorough investigation. The deontic modality verb was used to indicate an obligation on the part of the PDP members to take up an investigation on the election results. Despite the fact that most Nigerians appreciated the good conduct of the election, the opposition party felt bad and concluded that the APC aspirant won the election because Attahiru Jega was bias. The deontic modality ‘will’ is used by the speaker to depict the decision of the PDP members to table their grievance to the appropriate quarters.

4.4.1 Opinion that represents social obligation and the use of deontic modality ‘should’

Excerpt 61:

Those who are celebrating and those who are sorrowing **should** give peace a chance.

Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015.

In political contest, a group will emerge as the winner while the other party loses. The President-elect had lost the election for three consecutive times before he won the election on his fourth attempt. The President-elect pleaded to those that were celebrating to do so with all modesty and those who are sorrowing should not allow their present political situation to be controlled, rather they should manage the situation peacefully. The victorious party must not over celebrate because it does not take long before the political music changes, everything must be done in modesty.

The deontic modality used in the above excerpt is used to express caution. Despite the fact that the incumbent President was defeated, he accepted it in good fate and was able to curb few Nigerians that might have planned revolt against the President-elect. Most politicians play the game like ‘do or die’ affairs. But the incumbent President wanted full democracy to be in place. No matter the category that Nigerians belong, there must be a degree of sanity that should be in operation though Nigeria is a lawless country where people do things to the extreme. In view of this, the President fore-warned the citizens never to take laws into their hands. The deontic auxiliary ‘should’ is used as a weak form to portray caution on the part of Nigerians, who were excited about the election results

never to disrupt the peace of their immediate environment in the process of celebrating their party.

Excerpt 62:

General Buhari **should** ensure that he leaves Nigerians far more united than he met them.

The Punch, April 3, 2015

Excerpt 63:

He **should** justify his victory by making Nigeria better than he met it.

Guardian, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 64:

General Buhari **should** lead by example.

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

In excerpt 62, 'should' which reflects a weak obligation is used in relation to the responsibility of the President-elect, but the strong deontic is used when reference is made to the promises the President-elect made during his campaign. 'Must' in this context, is used as a command. The obligation of 'should' is not as binding as with 'must'. It may be unfulfilled. However, 'should' is used in the discourses to point out the obligation of individuals in the country.

In excerpt 63 above, the speaker used the deontic modality to emphasise the need for the in-coming President to unite the Nation. He should see it as an obligation to build the oneness in the country. The country was on the verge of division when the election was conducted. There has been increased discrimination in the country. No Nigerian seemed to trust people from other parts of the country. Boko Haram insurgency was eating deep into the fabric of the nation in the North, militants were perpetrating evil in the South-South and cases of kidnappers were imminent in the South-West of the country. Nigerians in the midst of these atrocities called the attention of the in-coming President to unite the nation. In excerpt 64, the deontic modality 'should' is used as an obligation on the part of the in-coming President to lead the nation by example considering the fact that nobody is

above the law, but the ruler and the ruled are under the control of the law. There is no offence in a lawless society, but when there is law then the law breakers should be punished.

Excerpt 65:

The victory of Buhari **should** be seen as victory for Nigerians' Democracy.

Guardian April 2, 2015.

Some of the celebrants commended that it was a good result that was recorded in the Nigerian political system. Prof. Jega made everything transparent to Nigerians in order to examine and criticise the election process. In previous elections in the country there were high degrees of results manipulation. The results showed that the General won. Everybody was happy because for the first time, an incumbent President would be unseated through a translucent electoral processes .The deontic modal verb 'should' is used to portray an obligation on the part of Nigerians to see the election as a victory for Nigerians' democracy.

4.4.2 Opinion that represents expectancy and the use of modal auxiliary verb 'would'

Hope can be said to mean a feeling of wanting something to happen or true and believing that it is possible or likely.

Excerpt 66:

...It was important that the President-elect always remember that the mandate given to him is for change and Nigerians **would** expect to see the change.

Nigerian Tribune April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 67:

He contended that the kind of change that **would** be ushered leading to social and developmental **rebirth would** be one that had never been witnessed in the country in the last 16 years.

Nigerian Tribune April 2, 2015.

This statement was made by Senate Majority Leader, Victor Ndoma- Egba. Who pointed the awareness of the President-elect to the promises made by him and his political team during the electoral campaign? The mandate given him was change from economic retrogression, unemployment, political instability and lack of social amenities to a government that would; sustain the economic development, put total end to evil perpetrators and corrupt people, encourage the growth of democracy in the country, provide the people with their basic needs, that is, good roads, health care services, create jobs and encourage foreign investors to establish industries in Nigeria, and build functional schools with competent teachers coupled with adequate materials that would enhance learning. Inasmuch, as these immediate needs of people are not in place, change would be the answer. The modal auxiliary verb ‘would’ employed in the excerpts above is used to portray optimism that the incoming administration has the potential of performing better than the previous administrations.

Excerpt 68:

I am hopeful and optimistic that General Buhari **would** live up to the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians.

Punch, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 69:

Buhari’s government **would** bring about the much needed security, economic growth and development.

Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 70:

The victory would detach the nation’s economy from its current bond to dollars.

The Nation, April 1, 2015.

In the above excerpts (68-69), the use of modal ‘would’ indicates political will and commitment. The use of ‘would’ in excerpt 11 reveals that Nigerians are anxious to have a government that is ready to provide the basic needs of the people for them. The APC leader (Asiwaju Bola Tinubu) added that the President- elect, who hailed from his party APC would introduce common sense reform which foregrounded diligent, loyalty and socio-political reformation coupled with economic stability in the country. In excerpt 70,

the President-elect would place more value on naira. From the speaker's point of view, Nigeria has been a country that depends too much on foreign products, whereas naira has a lesser value in the stock market, which has been affecting the economic strength of the nation. The speaker believes that the in-comig President would encourage Nigerians to start producing goods in the country that will expand the economic growth of the country and detach it from its bond to dollars.

4.4.3 Opinion that represents promise and the use of deontic modal verb 'shall'

Promise is a statement that you will definitely do or provide something.

Excerpt 71:

He has promised a government that he will respect and uphold freedom of expression. You **shall** be able to voice your opinion without fear of reprisal or victimisation.' I **shall** work for those who voted for me as well as those who did not vote at all.

The Guardian, April 7, 2015

Excerpt 72:

He has promised to push the democratic frontier forward by instituting a government that believes in and lives by rule of law, 'in which none **shall** be so above the law that they are not subject to its dictates, and none **shall** be so below it that they are not availed of its protection'

Punch, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 73:

You **shall** be able to go to bed knowing that you are saved.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

From the above, the speaker reminded the President-elect the promises he made to Nigerians during his manifestos. The deontic modal auxiliary is used as a weak-obligation that the rule of law would seek to the protection of the fundamental human rights of the people in the society irrespective of the social class in the society. In excerpt 72, the president-elect promised that the ideas or beliefs of Nigerians irrespective of their social class/status will be listened to without fear of being harmed or punished for

expressing their view. The incoming administration will not treat the people unfairly for making their views known about the political system or organisation.

The President-elect was of the opinion that everybody's ideas would be welcomed in his government. In excerpt 73, the President-elect promised Nigerians that he is ready to work for them; he described his victory as an opportunity for him to govern the country including the opposition party and those who chose not to vote at all. Also, in excerpt 74, the President -elect gave out his words that the protection of the people will never be allowed to be jeopardised by any group (*Boko Haram*) no matter how powerful they may be.

Excerpt 75: None **shall** be so above the law that they are not subject to its dictate, and none shall be so below it that they are not availed of its protection.
Punch, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 76: We **shall** faithfully serve you.
Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 77: My team and **shall** faithfully serve you.
Vanguard, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 78: I **shall** treat everyone of you as my own.
The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 79: There **shall** no longer be a ruling party again.
Punch April 3, 2015.

In excerpt 75 the President promised that, the rule of law would be practised in the country, the fundamental human rights of the citizens would be enthroned. The President-elect promised that none shall be above the law, when someone is above the law, such an individual can do or undo without being reprimanded by the court of law.

Also, none shall be below the law that their fundamental human right would not be freely exercised. There will be equality before the law whether a citizen belongs to a

high, middle or low class. The President-elect expressly promised that his administration would serve the country. In excerpts (76-77), the in-coming President made use of the adverb 'faithfully' which implies that the in-coming administration promised to remain loyal in discharging his duties or responsibilities to the masses. The President-elect went further to generalise the fact that he would not only faithfully serve the country, but, that his team and everybody involved in his administration will remain loyal to the governed. Their call is to serve and not to be served; he promised that his administration will not be a ruling party, that is, a party that officially gives instruction on how things must be done or what is allowed rather, it will be an administration that would allow full practise of democracy in the country.

The excerpts (78-79) indicated a weak form of obligation. The President introduced deontic 'shall' to assure Nigerians that they will exercise their fundamental human rights. He promised never to discriminate against any party. In Nigeria, peace and security of lives is no more obtainable, people do things out of fear but to allay this fear, the President gave his words that there will be safety. He used weak deontic modal auxiliary verb to express his opinion concerning the in-coming administration.

4.4.4 Opinion that represents obligation and social responsibility and the use of 'must'

Responsibility is a duty to be in charge of someone or something, so that you can make decisions and can be blamed if something bad happens. Due to the position the president is holding in the country, he has some duties to perform.

Excerpt 80:

All hands **must** be on deck to support the incoming government.

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 81:

Nigerians **must** embrace attitudinal reform as well as uphold ethnical value if we truly want a Nigeria where things work.

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 82:

He **must** also keep the promises he made to them.

The Punch, April 3, 2015.

The deontic modality used in the above excerpts denotes obligation and social responsibility of the people in the country and that of the President. The discursive issues in excerpt 80, charged Nigerians to give their total support to the incoming president. Another social responsibility of Nigerians is for them to embrace attitudinal reform. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic community, therefore, in order to maintain peace and unity in the country, Nigerians must be positive in their disposition towards one another irrespective of their various religious and ethnic backgrounds.

In excerpt 81, Adelaja employed ‘must’ as a strong modal verb to compel Nigerians to display positive attitude in their relationship with one another. There should not be ethnical discrimination among them, while in excerpt 82, Ogunlewe opines that the President-elect should arise to all the promises he made during his campaigns. He sees leadership as a clarion call to responsibility, therefore, he uses deontic modality ‘must’ to pinpoint strong obligation on the part of president elect to perform his duties. The modal ‘must’ in the above excerpt expresses obligation, compulsion and assurance of confidence in the political system.

Excerpt 83:

Overall interest **must** be our priority at all times.

The Punch, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 84:

Peace and security of lives and property **must** be enthroned.

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 85:

I **must** congratulate the outgoing president Goodluck Jonathan for his spirit of sportsmanship.

Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 86:

Nigerians **must** forgive Buhari's past. There is a moment when we must put the past aside.

The Punch, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 87:

Systematic reform **must** be stepped up across all sectors.

Vanguard, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 88:

Buhari **must** be fair to all.

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 89:

All hands **must** be on deck to support the in-coming government.

The Nation, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 90:

Citizens **must** be made to understand what it means to be a Nigerian, not how to be Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Ijaw, Efik, Ibibio, or Birom. We **must** now look beyond Politics of ethnic brinkmanship and face the gigantic task of nation-building.

The Punch, April 2, 2015.

In excerpt 83, the President-elect employed the modal verb 'must' to reflect an obligation on his part to render necessary service to the populace. Meanwhile, it should be noted that in the opinion of most Nigerians, he focused his attention on the fact that there must not be any form of discrimination in his government. Also, the President-elect is also advised to keep all the promises he made during his campaigns because Nigerians are expectant; they want a government that will move the country forward.

In excerpts 84 and 85, Nigerians call the attention of the President-elect to protect lives, maintain peace and order and ensure the security of lives and properties bearing in mind that in his manifesto, he promised to restore an enabling environment for people residing in the country. The President-elect has the obligation to protect the people. The results of the election have shown both ethnic loyalty and the religious beliefs of the people in the country.

In excerpt 86, Nigerians are compelled to forgive Buhari all his past misdeeds, 'must' is used to depict a moral obligation on the part of Nigerians never to allow the past events

to over rule the present. The Nobel laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka, in his opinion, posited that Nigerians must show a Nelson Mandela-like ability to forgive the past of President-elect, General Muhammadu Buhari as an iron-fisted military ruler. From Wole Soyinka's opinion, he pleaded with Nigerians to live above the past occurrence. From his opinion, none of the party members is an angel, (APC and PDP) both are filled with corrupt minds.

In excerpts 87 and 89, the speaker obliged the President-elect to carry out a planned procedure that would cut across all sectors without any form of favouritism of one sector against the other. The national cake must be evenly distributed in order for him to justify to a good degree his fairness to the citizens. While in excerpt 90, the speaker described the situation in the country as a call for urgent intervention on the part of the in-coming administration to enlighten the masses in order to avoid discrimination among the various ethnic groups. The deontic modality 'must' is used to express the social obligation on both the President and Nigerians to allow peace to reign in the country.

4.4.5 Opinion that represents appeal and the use of deontic modality 'must'

Appeal is an urgent request for something to happen. The linguistic modality used in the following excerpt is ultimately used in order to persuade the citizens to forgive Buhari of his past misdeeds.

Excerpt 91:

Nigerians **must** forgive Buhari's past there is a moment when we must put the past aside.

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 92:

We **must** forget our old battle and past grievances and learn to forge ahead.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

When he was the military President of Nigeria between the period of 1983 and 1985, he failed to respect the monarchs of Nigerians major ethnic groups. Therefore, Wole Soyinka appealed to Nigerians to forgive Buhari of his atrocities. Also, in excerpt 63, Gen Buhari urges Nigerians to forget about his past failures, while seeking for their

optimum cooperation in order to have a smooth government. The modal ‘must’ in the above excerpts express obligation and compulsion on the part of Nigerians to forgive and forget about the past.

4.4 Opinions that reflected Buhari’s victory as well deserved and the use of lexical modalities

Undoubtedly, Buhari’s victory as reflected in the final results of the election did not come on the platter of gold. The 2015 Presidential election was the keenest and most energy-sapping contest since Nigeria returned to democracy about 16 Syears ago. Buhari at this time leveraged on the coalescence of four major political parties into a broad based opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), to be in good stead for his fourth effort at being elected President of the most populous Black nation.

Discontented with the formation of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), where he lost the 2003 election, Buhari had wandered with his members to propose the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). For a second time, he had to disintegrate the creation of the CPC during the period of the construction of the mega party, APC, following his futile effort at winning the 2007 and 2011 elections, regardless of structuring the alliances with the defaunct Action Congress of Nideria (ACN). APC displayed hefty and renowned politicians in the land, many of whom deserted the ruling PDP owing to inner disagreements.

Buhari was as most likely to bring to bear on the leadership of the country and indeed state apparatus his rich, vast military background, and experience, coupled with a Spartan way of life and restraint; reasons that made him a champion in the midst of most Nigerians. These and many of his qualifications were mandatory for him to guide the boat of the country in the visage of numerous frightening challenges.

In his quest for power, Buhari has been the subject in the politics of the time. His views on a number of critical national issues have elicited different opinions. The reason most people of high calibre liked the President–elect was his detestation for the misuse of office and universal impunity by public office holders. He launched a continuous drive for educating the people through the traditions of regulation and intelligibility, which have lasted till date. Beyond the War Against Indiscipline (WAI), which has become a

mantra in the country, Buhari was proactive in tackling endemic corruption, one crusade that featured prominently throughout his pre-election campaign promises. He promised to lead by example in enthroning honesty among all classes of Nigerians. This promise was against the background of his stewardship at other levels of responsibility in the past and under different administrations. The following excerpts are public opinions that support the victory of the President-elect as a deserved victory.

Excerpt 93:

Senate leader, Victor Ndoma Egba, has **congratulated** president-elect, General Muhammadu Buhari **on his victory, describing it as the high point of Nigeria's democracy.**

Vanguard Newspaper April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 94:

Okupe wrote: **'it has pleased the Almighty God to give victory to Buhari, the Presidential candidate of the APC and the President-elect.**

The Guardian, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 95

A former Governor of Osun State, Isiaka Adeleke said the victory **"was ordained by God."**

The Guardian April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 96:

Former vice-president Atiku Abubakar also **congratulated** the winner, saying the **victory symbolises national rebirth.**

The Punch April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 97:

Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi **described Buhari's victor as the best thing to happen to Nigeria's democratic experience and a signal to the end of the People's Democratic Party.**

The Nation April, 2, 2015.

Excerpt 98:

A former National Secretary of the PDP, Olagunsoye Oyinlola, **described the victory as a huge victory for all Nigerians.**

The Nation, April 1, 2015.

In the above excerpts people from different walks of life expressed their feelings towards the victory of the President-elect Gen. Muhammadu Buhari in person. The incumbent President portrayed a noble character by being the first Nigerian to congratulate the President-elect. It has been recorded as an act of complete sportsmanship and political maturity on his part. It was observed to have been a great improvement in the political development of the country. Both the former President and his Vice-President (Olusegun Obasanjo and Atiku Abubakar) also rejoiced with the elected President. According to Okupe, he saw Buhari's victory as what pleased the Almighty God, who gave Buhari victory after contesting for the same post, without success, yet he did not give up in his pursuit to become the President of the country. Based on people's ideology about God, He is regarded as the giver of good things. The victory of Buhari was assumed to have been ordained by God since he was the candidate of the majority group that voted during the 2015 Presidential election in the country. The former Governor of Osun State Isiaka Adeleke described the triumph as God's preordained victory. The points of view of individuals reflect the political party each of the speakers is affiliated to in the country. According to excerpt 96, the speaker opined that Buhari's victory will enhance political revolution in the country which will facilitate political transformation and economic reformation in the country. In excerpt 97 Buhari's victory is compared to liberation from the hand of PDP's political 'god fathers' who have held Nigerians into their political captivity for sixteen consecutive years. The victory drastically changed the political history of the country, while Olagunsoye Oyinlola, the former Governor of Osun State, in excerpt 98, viewed the victory of Buhari as a huge victory in the political history of the country.

Excerpt 99:

Imo State Governor, Rochas Okorocha, said by the **victory he has been justified for his decision to be part of the party merge, that resulted in the creation of the APC.**

Vanguard April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 100:

Aliyu, in a statement by his chief press secretary, Israel Ebije, said the victory of Buhari **should** be seen as **victory** for Nigeria.

Guardian April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 101:

Ogunlewe, who is a chieftain of the PDP in Lagos, **described** the elections as a **victory for democracy and Nigerians.**

The Punch, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 102

... This **victory** to me **conveys** two significant statements on political **history and evolution.**

The Nigerian Tribune, April 3, 2015.

The Imo State Governor, Rochas Okorocha, described the victory with the use of lexical modal verb 'justified'. He claimed that the victory was enhanced as a result of the merging of the political parties which formed the APC. No doubt about the positive influence which the political party had on the election results, being the most powerful opposition party in the country. In the opinion of Aliyu, the deontic modality 'should' is used by the speaker as an indication that the victory is not restricted to APC members only rather the victory should be seen as victory for all Nigerians. The Presidential election was recorded as the first of its kind that Nigerians came out to vote in enmass for the party of their choice.

Excerpt 103:

We congratulate the APC standard bearer, Buhari, for his resilience and **victory** in this election....

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 104:

We **congratulate** General Muhammadu Buhari for his **victory** in the just concluded presidential election.

The Punch, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 105:

Governor Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State on his part **argued** that the victory of General Muhammadu Buhari is **a victory against political god fathers and PDP's arrogance.**

Vanguard, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 106:

...Victory of the Presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress, APC Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) **as the best thing to happen to a country that has endured 16 years of misrule at the centre.**

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 107:

Oshiomhole in a statement signed by his chief press secretary Peter Okhira, said 'The spread of your victory across the length and breadth of the country **shows your national acceptance as the man Nigeria needs at this critical stage to reposition her from 16 years of misrule of the PDP.**

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

4.5 Opinions that represent the new dawn of democracy in Nigeria

The excerpts in this section display the opinions and reactions of people after the election results had been announced. It revealed that the political orientation of those who voted was to vote for the party of their choice. In the excerpts, the outgoing President appreciated those who participated in the election process. This is equally corroborated

in excerpt 2 when he stated that he promised Nigerians free and fair elections, which he had fulfilled. He also gave credence to the genuine nature of democracy displayed in the last Presidential election. The victory was described as a great victory for democracy in the country.

In the analysis below, rhetorical use of modal auxiliaries (will, shall, should, would and must) in Nigeria political party results is investigated.

4.5.1 Function of true democracy and the use of ‘feel’, ‘believe’ and ‘clearly’

Democracy is a system of government in which every citizen in the country can vote to elect government officials.

Excerpt 108:

I **believe** that we have a genuine case of born-again democrats.

The Nation, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 109:

I **feel** truly honoured and humbled that the Nigerian people have so clearly chosen me to lead them.

Punch, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 110:

We **rejoice** with the APC and the people of Nigeria on the progress we have jointly made in our democratic journey.

Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 111:

Nigerians have spoken. They have **clearly** spoken through their votes.

Guardian, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 112:

We **need to** go back to the era of WAI (War Against Indiscipline) ... We should not allow corruption to destroy our great nation.

Guardian, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 113:

I **think** the priority of Buhari’s administration should be to pacify and try to mend the various cracks in the Nigerian society ...the result of the elections has shown

that the country is fragmented along ethnic and religious lines.

Guardian, April 1, 2015.

In excerpt 108, Nigerians have confidence in the nature of democracy practised in Nigeria. It is obvious that the democratic system of ruling has been introduced in Nigeria since 1999, but it has been the government of one party (PDP), in the previous elections, Nigerians were given the opportunity to elect the President of their choice without manipulating the elections results.

Also, the President-elect was happy for the type of election that made him emerge as the winner. It was a clear declaration of fact that Nigerians truly wanted Buhari as the President. Nigerians believe that since the introduction of democratic system of government, the election accorded Nigerians the opportunity to exercise their fundamental human rights. The use of modal lexical verb 'believe' is observed in excerpt 108 to reveal the opinion of the writer concerning a true democracy in the country. It shows good confidence about democracy in the country. History has recorded several acts of rigging of election results in the past but during the 2015 elections in the country, people were given the privilege to express their franchise.

In excerpt 109, Nigerians gave the President-elect an impression that he was generally accepted by them. The President displayed his emotions towards the election considering how conspicuous his victory has made Nigerians happy, in a bid to appreciate the gesture; he declared that the election's result actually made him feel so humble, because everybody in the country paid a keen attention to the election results. This was a man that has contested for three consecutive times before he finally emerged as the President of the country. It was so glaring that Nigerians actually wanted President Buhari to rule the country which the peoples' votes actually validated. 'Jointly' as used here highlights collective responsibility in actualizing democracy in the country. The election results gave Nigerians a true sense of belonging, people who voted and those who did not vote ensured that they followed-up the election results in order to avoid any form of manipulation by the ruling party. When Orubebe attempted to disrupt the collation of the election results, the moment he discovered that he was not receiving support from any

angle, he succumbed to the INEC pronouncement about the election results and the aftermath of his disposition was rebuked from Nigerians both at home and abroad.

In Excerpts 110 and 111, the people did not protest verbally, but their votes clearly revealed their stand. The best each political party will do is to canvass during the manifesto but none has the political power to compel people to vote for their party. Individuals voted for the party they wanted to vote for, which was demonstrated through their votes.

The lexical verb ‘need to’ used in excerpt 112, is an indication that Nigerians should not allow stealing of government fund to dominate our nation which has the tendency of destroying the nation’s wealth completely. The War Against Indiscipline which was introduced by Buhari when he was the Head of State in 1983, should be reviewed or implemented. The subjective view of the writer is presented with the use of ‘I think’ in excerpt 113. This justifies the opinion that the main obligation of Buhari is to unite the country. The results of the election indicated both ethnic loyalty and the religious beliefs of the people in the country.

4.5.2 Functions of Obligation versus ‘believe’ ‘must’ and ‘should’

Excerpt 114:

I take it that Obasanjo **believes** in his own relevance. He **should** be satisfied that Buhari is and **will** continue to be surrounded by well honoured men and women that **can** honourably be called child of Nigeria-title that **must** only be reserved for the ultimate patriot like GEJ.

Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015.

He is obliged to tackle corruption and impunity in the country. The Buhari’s administration is given the ultimate priority to eradicate corruption in the country and ensure total transformation of lives and sanctity. It also shows that the administration is morally compelled to resist all harsh anti-people’s policies. In excerpt 114, the use of modal lexical verb ‘believes’ is used to indicate the support that Obasanjo has, in Buhari’s government. The modal verb ‘should’ is employed by the writer to express both intention and insistence. The use of ‘can’ in the expression above shows possibility while

'must' depicts an obligation on the part of the citizenry to give credence to the right attitude displayed by the Ex-President, that is, the citizenry is ready to give their total commitment to the administration of Buhari borrowing a leaf from Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, who was able to give back democracy to the people, whom they had desired most, realizing that the people have been traumatized by bad government. While excerpt 115, is the combination of both lexical and auxiliary modal verbs.

4.6 Opinions of President Goodluck Jonathan after the announcement of the Presidential results with the use of lexical modalities

Excerpt 115:

..: I **promised** the country free and fair elections. I have kept my word.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 116:

I **thank** you all for turning out en-masse for the March 28 General election.

Vanguard, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 117:

As I have always **affirmed**, nobody's ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian.

Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 118:

I have **conveyed** my personal best wishes to General Muhammadu Buhari.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 119:

I have also **expanded** the space for Nigerians to participate in the democratic process. That is one legacy I **will** like to see endure.

Punch, April 3, 2015.

In excerpt 115 and 116 lexical modalities 'promised' and 'thank' are used by the incumbent President to unravel the fact that he has been able to discharge his duties effectively. He promised Nigerians free and fair elections and emphasized on the fact that no Nigerian blood would be shed in the course of the election.

In excerpts (117-119) he appreciated the efforts of Nigerians by coming out en-mass to vote. On the eve that the election results would be announced, the Ex-President and other dignitaries in the country were ready to console Goodluck Jonathan in case he would feel bad about the pronouncement of the election results. Fortunately enough, when the election results were finally announced by the INEC officials in person of Professor Atthiru Jega, the Ex-President Goodluck Jonathan took it in good fate by being the first person to call the winner and congratulate him. Their sitting position and appearance show that they were expecting and highly anxious to hear the outcome of the election. The look of the President was also purposefully employed to exchange a few words about the psychological trauma he was going through when the election results were being collated. His sitting posture was tantamount to lack of confidence and resignation to fate. None of them sat down in a relaxed mood even the President. Their mood could be likened to that of mourning. The presence of a bishop at the scenario was probably to preach to the Ex-President to remain calm and accept his fate.

4.6.1 Opinion of President Goodluck Jonathan after the announcement of the Presidential election with the use of deontic modalities such as ‘will’, ‘must’, ‘should’ and ‘have’

Excerpt 120:

I **have** kept my word. I have also expanded the space for Nigerians to participate in the democratic process.

Vanguard, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 121:

That is one legacy I **will** like to see endure

The Nation, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 122:

PDP **should** be celebrating rather than mourning.

The Punch, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 123:

We **must** stand together as a party and look to the future with renewed optimism.

The Nation, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 124:

I **will** continue to do my best at the helm of national affairs until the end of my tenure.

Vanguard, April 2, 2015.

The outgoing President took it upon himself to ensure that democracy was fully practised during the election period. He could have exhibited his political strength as the incumbent President to rig the election results but in his own case, he chose not to get involved in such an act. The use of deontic modality ‘must’ and ‘should’ in excerpts 123

and 124 reflect social obligation on the part of the Ex-President to maintain peace and orderliness in the country He promised Nigerians free and fair elections. The deontic 'will' is used to reflect expectation from Nigerians. The Ex-President was able to conduct a free and fair election, according to the political history of the country, the election would be the first time since 1999 that the incumbent President would handover peacefully without taking the election results to court. He opined that the legacy must endure in the country. With this, he was able to develop the freedom for Nigerians to partake in the electoral process.

4.6.2 Opinions that Represents Congratulatory Messages from Ex-President and Patriotic Nigerians to Buhari with the use of lexical modality ('congratulate', 'demonstrated', 'proved' and 'called')

Excerpt 125:

President had lost an election and **congratulated** the winner in our political history.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 126:

Jonathan: (laughter) Congratulations. Buhari: Thank you very much. Your Excellency Jonathan: Sir, how things? Buhari: Well I'd **congratulate** you more because you ... Jonathan: One of these days, find time to come so that we can sort out how to plan the transitional period. Buhari: Alright, Your Excellency. Thank you very much. Jonathan: Okay, Congratulations Buhari: My respects, your Excellency. Thank you.

The Guardian, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 127:

I **congratulate** all Nigerians for successfully going through the process of the March 28th General elections.

The Punch, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 128:

Jonathan **congratulates** Buhari, concedes defeat.

The Guardian, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 129:

Abdulsalami hails President for **congratulating** Buhari.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 130:

...This is the first time where a contestant has **called** his rival to **congratulate** him and through his point, President Jonathan maintained a point that the blood of Nigerians is not worth his presidency and by his action he has **proved** that.

Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 131:

I **congratulate** all Nigerians for successfully going through the process of the March 28th General Elections with the commendable enthusiasm and commitment that was **demonstrated** nationwide.

The Punch, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 132:

By conceding defeat and **congratulating** your main challenger in the Presidential election, General Muhammadu Buhari, Mr President you have written your names in gold in Nigeria's history.

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

The lexical modality used in the above excerpts unveils the extent at which the Ex-President approved the results of the election. In Nigeria's political history, an opponent has never shown such gesture towards a rival. In this case, the incumbent President went as far as being the first to congratulate the President-elect. This disposition was done both through verbal and non-verbal means of communication. For those that could read, they were able to deduce good correlation between the Ex-President's behaviour and his verbal expression while others that could not read will be able to infer meaning(s) from the pictorial display of the President- elect and the Ex-President. It was the least expected

that the incumbent would call his main challenger to congratulate him, he didn't stop at that, he went further to congratulate Nigerians for that laudable achievement, that is, full establishment of democracy in the country

The newly elected President and the outgoing President exchange pleasantries with each other. This is an indication that the outgoing President has exercised positive reactions; he has displayed a high level of political maturity by accepting defeat and congratulating the incoming President. It is obvious that in any democratic setting, what is prevalent is the urge to continue in power even after the period of time stipulated in the constitution has elapsed. Despite the fact that some politicians that is, PDP members attempted to disrupt the election, result. While President Good Luck Jonathan was shaking hands with the President-elect, he put up a smiling face that reflected high level of excitement.

4.6.3 Opinions that represent Jonathan as a true statesman and the use of lexical and auxiliary modalities (will)

Power is intoxicating. People at the corridors of power in most cases find it difficult to hand over power to their opponents. PDP was in power for sixteen consecutive years though their party was voted against, but people's votes hardly counted. The 2007 Presidential election that brought Late President U'maru and his running mate to power was condemned by both local and international observers. But, in Jonathan's case, he was not willing to manipulate the election's results irrespective of the outcome either in his favour or otherwise. He clamoured for peace to reign in the country and allowed the people's choice to prevail. In view of this, many Nigerians believed that Jonathan had laid down a good leadership quality to be emulated by his successor.

Excerpt 133:

If the elections are conducted and I lose, of course, we will inaugurate a new government there is no way I **will** say if I lose I **will** not hand over.

Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015.

Many Nigerians were of the opinion that Jonathan was able to create a facilitating atmosphere for plausible elections because of his level of political open-mindedness. Unlike what the country had been used to, suppression of the opposition. He allowed people with different political opinions to publicize their views. The outgoing President

had mirrored an atmosphere of political tolerance that will sustain a positive political culture.

Excerpt 134:

On behalf of Nigerians, I want to **thank** President Jonathan for being the **statesman** that he is; he has proved that he is a statesman, and he has the love of this country in his heart.

The Guardian, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 135:

We are spell-bound and the reason and why we have come here is to **thank** President Jonathan for this **statesmanship**

The Nation, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 136:

In the history of Nigeria, I **think** this is the first time when a contestant has called his rival to **congratulate** him and through his point, President Jonathan maintained a point that the blood of Nigerians is not worth his presidency and by his action he has proved that.

The Punch, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 137:

I want to **thank** President Jonathan for being the **statesman** and he has his country in his heart.

Vanguard April 2, 2015.

Jonathan was the first person to congratulate the President-elect. His action revealed good intention that he had for Nigeria. He was seen as a lover of peace, his disposition towards the declaration of the election result was a tool used to sustain justice and harmony among the political parties that took part in the election. Going by Jonathan's attitude, Buhari was forced to curb his party members who might be willing to cause conflict or inter-party chaos to terminate such a plan. He went ahead to castigate any form of division among Nigerians. The positive disposition of Jonathan after the election results was announced triggered peace to reign among the APC and PDP members.

Buhari in a concise report stated shortly afterwards, demanded for moderation from party followers, saying anyone jubilating with him would not be caught up in the untamed celebration that included the persecution of rivals. President GEJ set a standard that could endear him to the organizers of the prestigious Nobel peace prize award.

Excerpt 138:

In the history of Nigeria, I **think** this is the first time when a contestant has called his rival to **congratulate** him.

Guardian, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 139:

Indeed, Jonathan **will** leave Aso Villa on May 29 with his head high...

The Punch, April, 2015.

After the announcement of the election results, both the international and local observers admired the attitude of Jonathan towards the election process in the country. He had laid a solid foundation for democracy. International and local observers in separate statements commended on Jonathan's leadership qualities all through the electoral procedure, because he longed for political tranquillity and a way forward in attaining a practicable democratic system based of government in Nigeria. The Ex-President had placed the interest of Nigerians as his priority, based on this; Jonathan was able to ascribe victory to himself.

The speaker used lexical modal verbs; 'think' and 'congratulate' to express his opinions regarding the Presidential election results in Nigeria. The opposition party respected the President's action as an exceptional exhibition of maturity and sportsmanship. On Dr. Jonathan's instant reaction when the votes were being gathered, APC said: "By that singular act, which went a long way in dousing post-election nervousness, the president has snatched victory from the maw of defeat, written his name in gold in the documentation of Nigeria's history and projected himself as a statesman".

Excerpt 140:

I **congratulate** Nigerians for this historic election in which an incumbent government at federal level has been voted out of office through a free and fair election.

Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 141:

To my colleague in the PDP, I **thank** you for your support; Today, PDP **should** be celebrating rather than mourning.

Vanguard April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 142:

As I have also **expanded** the space for Nigerians to participate in the democratic process. That is one legacy I **will** like to see endure.

The Nation April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 143:

I **promised** the country free and fair election. I **have** kept my words.

The Punch April 3, 2015.

In excerpt 140, the speaker employed the lexical modality ‘congratulate’ to describe how Nigerians have successfully exercised their franchise by trooping out en-mass to vote for the party of their choice. In excerpt 141, the Ex-President appreciated the effort of his party members by adopting the lexical modal verb ‘thanks’ to express his profound gratitude to members of the PDP. He used lexical modality ‘thank’ to appreciate Nigerians for supporting him during the electoral process. He went further to admonish PDP members to celebrate instead of mourning. In excerpt 142, the out-going President established a stabilized democratic society in the country, ordinarily, he could have manipulated the election results being the incumbent President, but he decided to lay a good legacy in the society, which he would love to see endure in the country.

The deontic modal auxiliary verb ‘should’ is used to encourage his party members never to lose hope in their political aspiration instead of mourning they should celebrate with the winner just as he has laid the good example. The above excerpts 141-144, reveal the view of the incumbent President about the concluded electoral process in the country.

The speaker employed lexical modalities to express his opinions on the election results. Lexical modalities such as: ‘thank’, ‘expanded’, ‘congratulate’ and ‘promised’ pinpoint the fact that the speaker has the love of his nation at heart. He also promised Nigeria free and fair election with the opinion that his ambition does not worth the blood of any Nigerian, while one of his predecessors proposed third term in the office, President Goodluck Jonathan was ready to leave the office with the election result that voted him out of office.

Excerpt 144: History **will** remember him for his political maturity.
The Punch, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 145: Indeed Jonathan **will** leave Aso Villa on May 29 with his head high...
The Guardian, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 146: The former Head of state said, ‘In any contest, there is always going to be a winner and President Jonathan has accepted that he lost and we want to **thank** him on behalf of Nigerians.
The Nation April 2, 2015

Excerpt 147: The APC also **confirmed** the historic call.
Vanguard, April 2, 2015

In excerpt 144, deontic modality ‘will’ is used to unveil the extent at which the Ex-President’s kind gesture towards his opponent, which was contrary to the attitude of most politicians in the country was appreciated. If the incumbent President were to be a power-hungry leader, he wouldn’t have been so humbled to have handed over power peacefully to the extent of calling his rival to congratulate him. It is expedient that in the Nigerian political history, he would be remembered for his political maturity that he exhibited. In excerpt 146, the former head of state would leave the Presidential Villa with great joy and high sense of achievement, ‘will’ is used in the above excerpt to depict an event that would ultimately take place the moment the in-coming President assumes his duty post. In excerpt 146, one of Nigerian’s Ex-Presidents appreciated the kind gesture of the incumbent President by using the lexical modality ‘thank’ to express

his gratitude to the incumbent President, while in excerpt 147, the opposition party APC also recognised that President Goodluck Jonathan has written his name in the Guinness book of record. And historically, he would remain a point of reference. In the statement, the lexical modal verb ‘confirmed’ is used to depict establish his political maturity which has been the basis for the historic call.

Excerpt 148: The incumbent has already gracefully **conceded** defeat and **congratulated** his successor...

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 149: In the history of Nigeria, I **think** this is the first time where a contestant has called his rival to congratulate him.

Nigerian Tribune, April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 150: Jonathan congratulates Buhari, **concedes** defeat.

The Punch, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 151: The incumbent has already gracefully **conceded** defeat and congratulated his successor...

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 152: Jonathan **congratulates** Buhari, **concedes** defeat.

The Guardian, April 3, 2015.

From the excerpts above, the predominant lexical modal verbs that are frequently used are ‘conceded’ and ‘congratulate’, which capture significantly, the statesmanship of the Ex-President. The Ex-President accepted the fact that he lost the election with a good fate. The lexical modal verb employed by the speaker is preceded by an adverb ‘gracefully’, which indicates an implied meaning of how he has accepted the defeat. He never felt sober about his defeat neither was he ashamed of the fact that an incumbent President would be relieved of his political seat; he proceeded to congratulate his rival. The epistemic modal verb ‘will’ is used to portray how the incumbent President would leave the White house. His magnanimity in defeat gave him good opportunity to leave Aso Rock with pride.

4.6.4 Representation of world leaders' opinions towards the 2015 presidential election and the use of lexical and auxiliary modalities

The international observers concluded that the 2015 Presidential election was free and fair. The elections was not rigged in any form, both United States and the United Kingdom have warned Nigerians against manipulation of election results and with that observation the conclusion was drawn that the election result was free and fair.

Excerpt 153:

Above all, the international community that has **observed, seen** and **assessed** the quality of this election **will** now respect Nigeria as good image of the black.

Vanguard, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 154:

He has **shown** the whole world that the black man is no longer in dilemma.

The Nation, April 2, 2015

From the above excerpts, it is important to point out the fact that process is not determined by an entity, people come from different parts of the world to critically examine the electioneering procedure, document their observation and have a comprehensive evaluation of the type of electioneering process that used to take place in the past, and the present electeering procedure that is taking place. When critical juxtapositions are made about it, then the international observers would be able to draw out their conclusion on the matter. In their conclusion, it was stated that Nigerians have attained a good level of political maturity based on their assessment of the electoral procedure. The lexical modalities used by the international observers are; 'observed', 'seen' and 'assessed'. The lexical items chosen depict the fact that they have carefully monitored the election process and detected both the strong and weak sides of the election process and are able to judge the worth of the election process in the country. In their concluding statement, the deontic modal verb is used to foreground the fact that international bodies are obliged to respect the political prowess of Nigeria.

Excerpt 155:

I **thank** him for his many years of service and his statesmanlike conduct at this critical junction

Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 156:

Obama also **praised** Nigeria's Independent National Election Commission (INEC) and its Chairman.

The Punch, April 2, 2015

Excerpt 157:

World leaders **congratulate** Buhari; **laud** Jonathan.

The Guardian, April 7, 2015

After the announcement of the election results, both the international and local observers admired the attitude of Jonathan towards the election process in the country. He was commended for his leadership qualities. His positive action after the election results was announced made him a leader of great repute. He displayed a positive attitude towards the election outcome which enhanced his credence from his opponents. He was able to eradicate any form of political tension or instability after the election result must have been declared in the country. He had successfully created a good template for others to follow in order to have a stabilized system of government. His positive disposition made both international observers and Nigerians to praise and celebrate him for his political maturity.

Excerpt 158:

US President Barack Obama has also **praised** President Goodluck Jonathan for conceding defeat in an election.

Vanguard April, 2, 2015.

Excerpt 159:

The United State Embassy **congratulates** Nigerians and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for an electoral process on April 11, 2015 that generally went well across the country and built on the success of the March 28.

Nigerian Tribune, April, 3, 2015.

Excerpt 160:

In the history of Nigeria, I **think** this is the first time when a contestant has **called** his rival to congratulate him...

The Nation, April 2, 2015.

Excerpt 161:

Prime minister Tony Blair, President Francois Hollande of France, Hassan Sheikah Mohamoud, Rwandan Leader Paul Kagame and Prime Minister of Niger, Mohamadou Issoufou congratulated General Muhammadu Buhari on his victory and Nigeria for conducting a credible election that **would** ensure a peaceful transfer of power from one elected administration to another.

The Guardian April 3, 2015.

Excerpt 162:

Nigeria is bigger than every one of us, and we **must** all rise beyond all political, ethnic, religious and sectional differences to support the incoming administration to move Nigeria forward.

The Nation, April 1, 2015.

Excerpt 163:

The election **would** affect the profile and indeed image of the blackman in the global context

The Nation, April 1, 2015.

The international observers keenly monitored the election process in the country. Since Nigeria started operating a democratic system of government, the process of handing over power has been recorded as a period for blood shedding, violence and political instability in the country. As a matter of fact, courts have always been the last option for most politicians to settle dispute over election results. In this case, it was the other way round as most people within and outside the country who observed the conduct of the election adjudged that it was free and fair.

There are different forms of modalities employed by the international leaders to unveil their joy over the election results in the country. Nigerians were previously seen as blackmen with black minds or black ideologies hence, nothing good could come out of the country. But, to their ultimate surprise, the election process was conducted peacefully and peoples' franchise was exercised. In history, it was recorded that Jonathan was the first incumbent president who would be defeated in an election, yet he went ahead to congratulate his rival on his victory. The facial expression of the international leaders depicted that of seriousness and authenticity in their speech which supported their verbal expressions on the election result.

4.7 Taxonomy of Epistemic and deontic Modality Devices used in the Research Study

Type	Abbrev	Word list and Example Sentences
		<p>Assume, believe, expect, feel, guess, identify, know, as you know, you know to my /our knowledge, I don't know, look, mean, seem, mean, I am not sure, think, I don't think.</p> <p>Examples: 165. I think this is the first time where a contestant has called his rival to congratulate him... 166. I think more in terms of the APC winning the election.</p> <p>167. I believe that we have a genuine case of a born – again democrat. 168. He believes if the power supply is stable, small and medium scale industries will spring up... 169. I feel truly honoured and humbled that the Nigerian people have so clearly chosen me to lead them. 170. The party made this position known in a statement by Mu'azu</p>
Modal Verb	Auxiliary	<p>Mauxv</p> <p>Can, could, may, might, would</p> <p>Examples: 171. The best thing that can happen to a country... 172. Buhari's government would bring about the much needed security... 173. The victory would detach the nation's economy from its current bond to dollar. 174. We have petroleum industry yet but we cannot turn them around.</p>
Necessity Modals		<p>Nec.Mod</p> <p>Have to, need, ought to, should, must</p> <p>Examples: 175. We have to have this change trophy of power 176. The victory of Buhari should be seen as victory for Nigeria's democracy. 177. He should justify his victory by making Nigeria better than he met it. 178. He must also keep the promises he made to them.</p> <p>179. overall interest must be our priority at all times</p>

The above table is the reflection of both epistemic and deontic modality devices that are obtainable in the text. In excerpt 165-170, 'think', 'believe', 'feel' and 'known' are used to depict the degree of the knowledge that the speakers have about the 2015 Presidential

election results. The speakers were able to evaluate the election results and the above modals were employed to reflect their varied opinions on the election results. Epistemic modality 'believe' is used in the subjective position in order to express the opinion of the speaker about the election results, based on the speaker's knowledge about previous electioneering process in the country he was of the opinion that, Nigeria has truly got it right on how to conduct a free and fair election. Another example of epistemic modality employed in the text is the use of 'feel' this explained the view of the President-elect on the 2015 election results of the country. He considered it as a process that has changed his orientation about the nature of political system being operated in the country. The modal auxiliary verbs 'can', 'could', 'may', 'might' and 'would' are used by the speakers to deploy their opinions on the expected obligation(s) on the part of the President-elect. Also, from the table necessity modals such as; 'have to', 'ought to', 'should' and 'must' were used to depict compulsion. The victory that the President attained was regarded as victory for Nigerians

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a summation of the findings of the study as it relates to the objectives of the study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study has investigated the study of modality in the representation of public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election results. The study was carried out using public opinions in the newspapers, five leading and authoritative newspapers in Nigeria were selected and analysed. The analysis of the study was premised on the Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, which served as its analytical framework. Specific attention was given to modality forms and functions in the text which were analysed.

The findings in the work reinforced the commitment in earlier studies on the place of modality in political discourses. The semantic codes drawn upon in the discourse interacted in various ways for projection of meaning in the discourse. The implication of this study is that linguistic modality is an important aspect of political expression globally and in Nigeria in particular, considering the language used to deploy political meanings and messages about politicians, political aspirants, political parties as well as the attitude of the public (electorates) or some segments of the general public to their political leaders and parties. Therefore, the research underscores the importance of modality in expressing public opinions on political discourses.

5.2 Nationalistic perspective

The prominent political parties in the country that is, the APC and PDP were able to exchange political power without dispute of any kind. Despite the fact that PDP was defeated in the 2015 Presidential election in Nigeria, there was peace and tranquility in the country. The success of the election was not limited to the contestants alone, but to all Nigerians who came out enmass to vote for the candidate of their choice. The incoming President promised to serve Nigerians, faithfully and went further to assure Nigerians that he would not discriminate among the citizenry irrespective of their tribe,

geographical location or political affiliation. Everybody would receive equal treatment from the President.

The observers from other countries attested to the fact that the electoral process of the 2015 Presidential election in Nigeria was significant in the sense that Nigerians turned out in a reasonable number to cast their votes for the party of their choice and harmoniously determine the future of their country peacefully. The out-going President fulfilled the promise he made to Nigerians by not allowing blood shed to occur after the pronouncement of the election results. He emphasised that anyone that behaves unruly should be made to face the consequences of his /her action. In view of that pronouncement, few Nigerians who wanted to go contrary were curbed. Linguistic modalities are used to support the opinions of 2015 Presidential election results from nationalistic perspectives.

5.3 Historical perspective

Considering the political trend of Nigeria's politics, it has been recorded that the transitions of power used to cause political instability, violence, blood shed and insecurity in the country. The incumbent President, Goodluck Jonathan, was able to make a point in the political history of the country. His attitude during and after the declaration of election results signified that he is a patriotic Nigerian and an emblem of good leadership quality. Despite his political ambition to go for second term in office, he never allowed his desire to over-rule peoples' choice. The 2015 Presidential election was characterised by peaceful conduct of the electorates and the first time that an opposition party would unseat a current President in the country's history. Nigerians regarded the Ex- President as God-sent because his failure to vacate the office would have amounted to blood shed and disaster in the country. In the political history, President Goodluck Jonathan made a historical impart, he displayed good quality of political maturity and a well-managed political administration. Jonathan was able to concede defeat and went ahead to be the first person to congratulate the President-elect, this singular action attributed to him unfaded glory that would never be forgotten in the nation's political history. Both deontic and epistemic modalities were adopted to depict the opinions of Nigerians on the 2015 Presidential election from the historical perspectives.

5.4 Moralistic perspective

The moral standard of the out-going President can not be over emphasised. His magnanimity in defeat portrayed him as a leader with good integrity. Nigerians appreciated his sportsmanship in defeat. Modal verbs were employed to unveil the good qualities of the Ex-President. Also,lexical modal verbs such as ‘commended’, ‘thank’, ‘congratulate’ and ‘praise’ were used in expressing public opinions that show cases of appreciation to God and the Ex- President for handing over the baton of government peacefully without any form of rancour among the parties involved in the electoral contest. The Ex-President’s loyalty to his word was highly commendable and he was not power intoxicated. The lexical modal verb ‘praise’ was used on several occasions by people to convey their level of gratitude to the Ex-President for displaying a relentless effort in determining and sustaining a conducive environment for the citizenry before and after the conduct of the election.

5.5 Generalisations

The study has established the importance of language in the representation of public opinions. The role is revealed through modality functions, while lexical modality choices reveal the words and expressions that imply explicit points of view of the public and modal auxiliaries that express the opinions are engaged in grammar.

One also discovered that newspapers can employ language to express various or different opinions on the same or similar events. In such cases, the guiding principle of each news paper encourages the public to express their opinions on various political issues happening in the country. For instance, eight opinions were expressed under three grounds by *The Nation*, *The Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Guardian* newspapers in their report on the 2015 Nigeria’s Presidential election results based on their individual grounds about the electioneering process and the election results.

The deployment of lexical and grammatical resources of English in representing different opinions on the election results shows the predisposition of Nigerian’s newspapers to the pursuit of fairness, unity, political stability and high moral standards. Although, different opinions were expressed in the 2015 Presidential election results, each newspaper believed that it was working for the protection of Nigeria’s democracy through its

promotion of high moral standards and political stability. Thus, the analysis of public opinions in media reports on the 2015 Presidential election results was significant for the understanding of the socio-political realities in Nigeria.

5.6 Conclusion

Modality functions in public opinions on the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results in the selected national newspapers have been examined and analysed. It is observed that Nigerians expressed their opinions in different forms. Public opinions are represented under eight grounds in the Nigerian context- volition, obligation and social responsibility, expectancy, appeal, condemnation, bias, praise and promise. The opinions presented in this study demonstrate that public opinions on the Presidential elections remain a controversial issue in Nigerian society and politics. Also, unveiled are the modality choices made by writers to foreground these opinions. The study revealed that modal auxiliaries 'must', 'should', 'have to', 'need to', 'ought to', have been used to perform deontic functions, portraying writers' desires and the need to carry out certain obligations. They were used to emphasize the need for Nigerians and the President-elect to exhibit joint efforts in order to have a stabilized democracy in the country. Writers used these modalities to point out the obligation of the state, religious institutions and the nation. Epistemic modality reflects the knowledge and beliefs of Nigerians about the 2015 Presidential elections. Those newspapers which in a bid to be objective and balanced, published articles that reflected both the positive and negative attitudes of people to the 2015 Presidential election were critically examined. It was also discovered that modality choices in relation to the different opinions were similar as represented in the newspapers.

The analysis revealed the textual representation of public opinions. We observed the ideological presentation of language which facilitated better understanding of the opinions presented by writer(s) to the reader(s) or audience.

The analysis revealed that modality was the linguistic device writers used in challenging the citizens to rise to a collective responsibility that will sustain democracy and good leadership in the country. This study avers that modals are not just linguistic elements, but most importantly, devices and ideological tools in relaying the opinions of people.

They were used to accentuate specific aims and opinions in the Nigerian context. It appears safe to conclude, then, that modality and public opinions are closely related as shown by the above analysis.

5.7 Recommendation

This study has limited itself to examining the modality function in public opinions on the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election results in selected national newspapers. The study identified different opinions on peace and unity, historical victory, obligation and social responsibility, new dawn of democracy, condemnation and sportsmanship associated with three perspectives that is, nationalistic, moralistic and historical perspectives. Further investigation could be carried out on how modality functions in public opinions on the 2015 Presidential election results were represented in online newspapers. This could lead to new discoveries in terms of what opinions were represented in such reports and how they were represented.

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