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**Research Paper**

## **Examining Discursive Polarization and Group Representations in Political Inaugurals**

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### **Abstract**

The characterizations of an individual are connected to the systems of committed beliefs and ideas of an associated group the person belongs- otherwise, the group representations. These representations relate implicit ideals, values, and relations that abound in political inaugurals, like the gubernatorial type, which has rarely received adequate scholarly attention in extant works- particularly from the socio-cognitive perspective. Van Dijk's ideology, Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, and Fauconnier and Turner's Conceptual Blending guided the framework of the study. They imbued the form-function perspective of the analysis, as well as the explanations of group representations as discursive polarization in the speeches of three Nigerian governors. The findings establish six discursive issues that signal six ideological traits- which in turn indicate the divergence of discourse participants, through four grammatical processes (relational, material, mental, and verbal) in the data. The article argues that indirect collective behaviors are replete in political discourses, thus signaling the discursive divides, and the sharply contrasting discursive behaviors informed by group opinions and beliefs that abound in political inaugurals- hence illustrate the ongoing mental activities in various political language use situations.

**Keywords:** *Ideology; socio-cognitive perspective; discursive polarization; political inaugurals address*

### **Introduction**

The political inaugural speech is the first formal address of a newly elected governor or president during oath taking (Britannica, 2021). It plays ideological function by which the policies of the new administration are made known to the people (Liu, 2012). The tradition of presenting an inaugural speech started with the United States' President, George Washington, on

April 30, 1789 (Kubát & Čech, 2016; Flexner, 1966). Nigeria's first inaugural address was delivered by President Shehu Shagari on October 1, 1979 (Aremu, 2017). It is a pack of discursive actions (textual, cognitive) and practices (social) within political settings. This is echoing van Dijk (1997) idea of this dimension of general discourse which is exclusive to professional politicians like state governors whose group representations (systems of belief and ideas) are indirectly presented. The systems of belief and ideas of a group form the foundation of the social representations, identities and practices of its members (Kashima et al., 2021). They are signaled through discourse properties- all of which are extremely connected to polarization behaviors, or contrasting of groups, sets of opinions, and practices.

### **Review of Literature**

*Most* of the extant works on inaugural speeches (for example (Taiwo, 2011; Ayeomoni & Akinkuolere, 2012; Horváth, 2012; Ezeifeke, 2014; Emeka-Nwobia, 2015; Koussouhon & Dossoumou, 2015; Ogunmuyiwa, 2015; Aluya & Edem, 2016; Medubi & Amuda, 2017; Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2017); Odebunmi, 2017; Okafor & Issife, 2017; Osisanwo, 2017; Alaba Akinwotu, 2018; Tarish, 2019; Anyanwu, 2020) focus on the presidential type, leaving the gubernatorial type to be adequately explored. They are mostly not clearly given to connecting discourse features and clausal structures in gubernatorial inaugurals to polarization through discursive group practices. A socio-cognitive interest in the divergence constructs in the first formal address of new governors- like those of Osun State, Nigeria, who ruled between 1999 and 2018- is crucial to establishing the indigenous or local representations of participants in various circumstances (Gelman, 2019) in such political discourse; and to foregrounding the mental activities connected to them. Therefore, this article tries to provide answers to the questions: how does discourse structures in the new governor's inaugural speech relate to discursive functions of polarization, that is marking patriotic (in-group) and oppositional (out-group) membership (Chilton, 2005; DiMaggio et al., 1996) in a political text?; how do these polarization relate group representations, thereby establishing tendencies of the governor and other discourse participants?; and how are the representations realized along the socio-cognitive bridge of meaning negotiations?

### **Methodology**

#### **Design**

The descriptive research design is adopted in this study because of the qualitative and quantitative approach of analysis adopted. It enabled the presentation of the findings derived from content analysis of the collected relevant data, as well as the presentation of some findings showing statistical evidence (Srikanth & Doddamani, 2013). The qualitative part of the analysis relied on the conceptual (socio-cognitive) approaches of CDA to provide systematic explanations of discursive behaviors in the data. The quantitative part relayed the information about the distribution of, and connections between discourse features in the inaugural speeches of the selected governors. The study was based on discursive behaviors in the inaugural speeches of three elected governors (Adebisi Akande (AA), Olagunsoye Oyinlola (OO), and Rauf Aregbesola (RA)) who ruled Osun State in the Western part of Nigeria between 1999 and 2018. The study was concluded in 2020.

## Materials

The sampling frame was derived by determining the category of governors that formed the definite list of the participants- from whose speeches the sample of the study was drawn. Two criteria determined the inclusion of a governor's speeches, including: having run a full single term in office, at least; and having well documented speeches. Four categories of the speeches (the inaugural speeches, the appropriation bill speeches, the state anniversary speeches, the New Year speeches), and only three of five populated governors, met the two criteria. Some pre-selection criteria that are relevant to the interest of the study guided the sampling procedure of the data. Only the inaugural speeches satisfied the criteria and were selected for textual sampling. The selection was based on its category as socio-cognitive and ideologically loaded political discourse. This aligns with van Dijk's (2008) view that "ideology is at play when language users engage in the on-going construction of meaning, as well as group-sensitive interpretation of social situation". A total of 5,744 clauses were subjected to discourse and pragmatic analysis. The selection was done strictly based on their relevance to the objectives of the study. Therefore, only clauses that are related or connected to ideological meanings were selected for analysis.

Therefore, the speeches were chosen because they relate "a form of social practice" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), whereby the governors signal group ideology through issues raised in their speeches, which are constructed from activities that involve and affect discursively, polarized participants in such political language use situations. The speeches provide a good ground for studying the connection between raised issues within clausal groups, signaled ideological representations, and polarization of discourse participants in an inaugural speech. The inaugural speeches show how ideology affects discourse directly or indirectly, as well as how it signposts division of interests and ideas. This illustrates how the selected Nigerian governors form biased representation of the social situation about other participants or the relations between them.

## Corpus

The data was sourced from published (printed) books, and online sources. Consent was sought through personal contacts with the Chief press secretaries of the governors who made copies of the printed publications available. The printed literatures are: "*A fresh start in Osun State: A collection of selected speeches and policy guidelines of Chief Adebisi Akande- the Executive Governor of Osun State (Osun State Government of Nigeria, 2002)*, *Treasure of the heart: Thoughts of a committed leader (Adelegan, 2007)*, and *The change Agent: Selected speeches of Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola Volume I (Ministry of information and strategy, 2014)*, and *Speech by the Governor of the State of Osun, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, at his inauguration (Osun.Gov.ng, 2014)*.

## Data Collection

All the collected data relate to the experiences and actions of the governors and discourse participants in the speeches. They were collected through the use of the long-established procedure of systematic searching for both the implicit and explicit discourse features (indirect data) for analysis in the study. The search was guided by the areas of concern of the study, including: group or ideological representations, which typify the data, and are marked within clausal groups of discourse structures. Other areas of interest of the study that guided the search and subsequent collection of the data border on the discursive behaviors in the speeches that

establishes polarizations. These were systematically searched for and collected in form of clauses through the analytical instruments adopted for the study.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The procedure of data analysis in this study is based on the discursive and socio-cognitive orientations of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which deals with “the study of structures of discourse”, “social conditions”, and discursive behaviors (van Dijk, 1998; 2008; 2009) CDA studies, like the present one, derive from various theoretical backgrounds and engage different data and methodologies. Therefore, discourse structures of the data were analysed with insights from Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)- which relates structure to communicative functions. Hence, the issues raised in the speeches are accounted for via this approach of examining structures in the speeches. Therefore, SFG assists this study to account for process types, participant types, circumstance types, as well as the resources through which clauses in speeches are combined. Their connection with the cognitive approach of critical study lies with the conceptual account of ideational function of language where discourse participants’ experience of reality is structured by various construal operations like the Conceptual Blending theory. It was leveraged to investigate the translation of abstract textual structures into more concrete, on-line, cognitive processes of discursive nature. In addition, it provides the opportunity to study the abstract structures of social situations presented in the sampled inaugural speeches. This was done within the mental spaces, that is, small conceptual packets constructed by the governors and other discourse participants as they think and make expressions for the purpose of local understanding and action. This procedure is “a systematically organized presentation of reality” (Lakoff & Chilton, 1995) in this kind of political speeches.

### **Theory**

Essentially, a critical analysis of language use in a political inaugural address includes explanations on how structures relate to communicative function (Wodak, 2006). Gaps should be reduced through explanations of cognitive realities of the features and structures in the speech. Therefore, this article draws from Fauconnier and Turner’s (2003) conceptual blending (CB) approach for the cognitive accounts of extended discourse by explaining the online meaning constructions of expressions in the data that relate polarizations (Kashima et al., 2021). These are from the small conceptual packets constructed by the governors and their hearers for the purpose of local understanding of the polarization suggested along ideological signals during language use (Lakoff & Chilton, 1995).

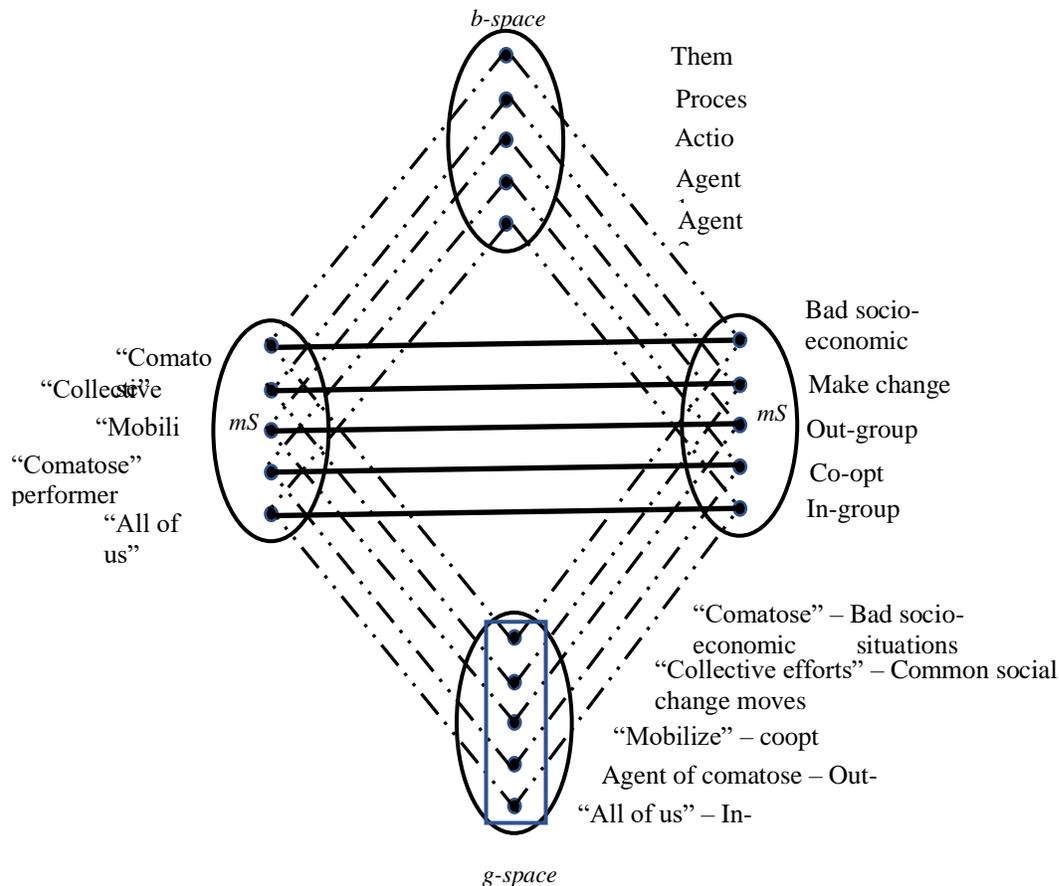
Hidden group ideological representations abound in the gubernatorial type of inaugural speeches. They are structured along the past and ongoing local events or situations that the new governor talks about and makes use of as communicative skills to present opinions about his administration. The skills, which relate to the mundane and everyday situations of hearers’ locality (Gelman, 2019) are displayed through shared knowledge of local events that polarize participants in terms of roles and actions that signal group beliefs and ideals. This thus lays the ground for the importance of the exploration of the formed subjective mental representations of groups, existing within a specific local geographical clime.

This argument is further advanced through the illustration of how the online meaning construction of the polarization is established in the conceptual blending patterns of various issues raised by the governors in the data. As an example, when expressions are made, like: *“Osun state today is comatose, to say the least. It will therefore take the collective efforts of all of*

us to mobilize all the resources”; new mental spaces (*ms*), which situate elements of divergent scenarios with different background frames are triggered. In this article, the spaces are tagged *ms1* and *ms2* housing divergent scenarios, as can be observed in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Blending Network For “Osun state today is comatose, to say the least. It will therefore take the collective efforts of all of us to mobilize all the resources”*



Within conceptual integration, *ms1* and *ms2* share counterpart connections, like the identity of participants (“*all of us*”; ‘performer of comatose’), the time (“*today*”), events and activities (“*collective efforts*”, “*mobilize resources*”) and the roles played by participants (‘*mobilizers*’) are blended at the *b-space* to bring about relations that do not exist in the separate *ms1* and *ms2*, like Theme, Process, Action and Agent. Therefrom, structures that *ms1* and *ms2* share are captured, hence *composed* in the generic, or *g-space* to produce the ideological traits of the implicit ingroup/outgroup polarization in the data.

## Findings

### Ideological Traits in the Inaugural Speeches

Ideologies are systems of belief and ideas of a group. They form the foundation of the social representations, identities and practices of group members. They are signaled through discourse properties which relate group ideals, value, and relations; all of which are extremely connected to

group polarization or contrasting of groups, sets of opinions and practices. These polarizations and contrasting are characterized by the convergence of features of a raised issue and connected clausal processes observed in the data. They relate to the basis of the knowledge and beliefs espoused by the governors in their manipulative discourse patterns. Six ideological traits are observed in the study. They are: the reformist, the messianic, the meliorist, the pietist, the pessimist, and the prejudiced ideological traits. They are signaled in the issues raised, through connected clausal processes. The ideological traits are discussed one after the other, starting with their frequency and percentage distributions in the speeches as presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Frequency of Ideological Traits Signaled in The Inaugural Speeches*

Ideological traits	AA		OO		RA		Frequency (Total)
	Clauses	Perc. (%)	Clauses	Perc. (%)	Clauses	Perc. (%)	
Pietist	106	10.56	354	16.35	426	17.55	886
Meliorist	114	11.35	367	16.95	442	18.20	923
Messianic	153	15.24	473	21.85	508	20.92	1,134
Reformist	201	20.02	490	22.63	583	24.01	1,274
Pessimist	216	21.51	332	15.33	271	11.16	819
Prejudiced	214	21.31	149	6.88	198	8.15	561
Total	1004	100	2165	100	2428	100	5597

Table 1 shows that the reformist has the highest frequency in the data, followed by the messianic, the meliorist, the pietist, the pessimist, and the prejudiced. The preponderance of the reformist ideological trait suggests the presentation of more of the political tendency and presumptions of social change that is necessary to transform the stems and practices of a particular administration to a qualitatively different administrative system and practices under a governor as against what obtained under an adversary. The next preponderant ideological trait is the messianic, which suggests that following the expression of social transformations, a governor presents self as a different, and fervent leader in terms of a social change that will impact positively on the people of the State. Next is the meliorist ideological trait, which suggests a governor's conviction regarding the possibility of social transformations leading to improvements of the world.

The highest percentage distribution of the ideological signals in Governor Adebisi Akande's speech is the pessimist, followed by the prejudiced, the reformist, the messianic, the meliorist and the pietist. The highest trait in Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola's speech is the reformist, followed by the messianic, the meliorist, the pessimist, the pietist, and the prejudiced. The highest espoused by Governor Rauf Aregbesola is the reformist. This is followed by the messianic, the meliorist, the pietist, the pessimist and the prejudiced. The Table also indicates that the reformist, the messianic, and the meliorist traits are common with Olagunsoye Oyinlola and Rauf Aregbesola, while the pessimist and prejudiced are distinctively characteristic of Adebisi Akande, and the pessimist and the pietist distinguish OO and RA respectively.

These common and distinctive ideological traits indicate the extent to which the opinions of the governors and other discourse participants, with respect to the issues raised in the data, are opposed; and the particular degree to which this opposition increases over the time. Therefore, it is argued that polarization in a political discourse like the gubernatorial inaugural speech is

established through binary ideological signals- indicating group representations of discourse participants. These representations are the indigenous social peculiarities of the people, which are situated in their construal packets where discourse meanings are realized. In addition, the distributions in the Table confirms that polarization is more than administrative policy differences, but rather on the in-group and out-group scale along the system of beliefs and social practices of discourse participants who could belong to any political nomenclature.

## Discussions

### Messianic Ideological Trait

Messianic ideological trait is signaled within discursive issues relating to the belief in an individual or group as the liberator of a people. The speaker presents himself or (an) ingroup member(s) as (an) emancipator(s), by maintaining that it is possible to improve the world by overcoming the main obstacles on the road to happiness. A particular dogma about this is political correctness of the governors. Discourses of this kind represent members of an ingroup and related interest as always right, against those of the outgroup.

A common pattern is that the speaker describes previous regime(s) in terms of their roles regarding the bad experiences that Osun people suffered, which are stored in their long-term memory. They are retrieved both consciously and unconsciously to gain online meaning of the raised issues. These mental activities therefore result in the hearers' view that the new regime represents the only hope to save current situation. This character representation is connected to the clausal groups that bear relational process (“*is*”) and material process (“*yearns*”) of the truth validity of the discourse. As an illustration in example 1, the expressions “*Osun state today is comatose*”, “*our dear state yearns for development*”, and “*our tortuous experience of the last seven and half years*” presuppose ideological traits that have negatively impacted on the people. Following this is the presentation of individual regimes as the only capable one to improve the world by overcoming the highlighted obstacles on the road to development.

A cognitive perspective of this pattern shows how the governors attempt to shape the meaning of their discourses using previous social experiences of their hearers. This is a deliberate connection of the global knowledge within the long-term memory (LTM) of each of the hearers with their short-term memory (STM) in order to either polarize group representations and effects. Commonly, global knowledge within LTMs or STMs is mapped with what obtains during the reign of a governor or political leader belonging to the ingroup. For example, “*Osun state today is comatose*” is connected with “*emphasis of this administration will thus be to create and nurture the enabling environment*”. So, Akande maps such LTM with what he intends to achieve during his reign and how he plans to so do. The major objective is to influence his hearers –Osun people- and add layers of depth to his argument based on Osun people’s prior knowledge and understanding.

Also, Oyinlola’s expression: “*events of the past clearly point to the fact that our state requires vibrant leadership*” describes Adebisi Akande in a different polarity and bad light, and he, Oyinlola, as the one with the vibrancy that Osun state needs.

(1) It is true that *Osun state today is comatose*, to say the least. It will therefore take the collective efforts of *all of us* to mobilize all the resources available within the state and turn them into wealth. *Emphasis of this administration will thus be to create and nurture the enabling environment* which will attract, encourage and assist private investment. (Adebisi Akande)

(2) *Kindly permit me to observe that Osun state, our dear state yearns for development. Events of the past clearly points to the fact that our state requires vibrant leadership that is totally committed to the wellbeing of the polity. I wish to assure you all that I have studied critically various activities of past government in Osun state and have arrived at the conclusion that the task ahead is enormous but achievable.* (Olagunsoye Oyinlola)

(3) *Our tortuous experience of the last seven and half years, during which the power of incumbency was used to choke the political space of our state and to denigrate organs of the state to instrument of terror, is a negation of the political liberalism for which we are celebrated. Our people must be permanently liberated from being pawns of power friends.* (Rauf Aregbesola)

Each of the three governors present issues relating to regime change by describing themselves as belonging to the ingroup, and taking the position of self as right and others as wrong- that is, binary representation. The description in their individual texts bear a clear lexicalization of collectivism, which describes an actor (the speaker) on one part and the hearers (another actor) on another part as collective actors belonging to the in-group. For example: “*all of us*” (example 1, above), “*our tortuous experience*” (example 3, above), and “*political liberalism for which we are celebrated*” indicate ideas of collectivism versus individualism (polarization). The action of coopting is carried out in the example, and marked by items like “*us*”, “*our*” and “*we*”. Hence, polarization is derived as the contrastive elements in *ms1* and *ms2* that the items triggers are processed at the *b-space*. This brings about emergent structures that indicate contrastive grounds of the goals, ideas or rights of an individual person versus ideas that are best for the collective group and personal relationships.

Co-textual arrangements of structures employed by the politicians to describe actors in their speeches largely present them as assuming the posture of liberators of their people along whom they, for instance, have shared “*tortuous experience*” with. The choice of such co-textual arrangement and description of collectivism is performative of the Aregbesola’s demonstration of deep understanding of the enormous suffering of Osun people under previous regimes before his advent, and a demonstration of his individual messianic capacity to liberate the people. It is a discursive polarization of the participants involved (Aregbesola versus predecessor) in the discourse.

He presents an emotion that typifies the style of inaugural political speech of a chief executive of a democratic state. He aggregates losses recorded under past government: “*power of incumbency was used to choke the political space of our state and to denigrate organs of the state to instrument of terror*”; and further ideologically describes the act as “*negation of the political liberalism*”. Then, he charts a way forward for the state through messianic ideological trait. He describes himself (within clausal groups of relational process) as having no other reason for being at the helm of affair than liberating the people: “*Our people must be permanently liberated*”. The choice of “*must*” foregrounds Aregbesola's messianic stance that he is in charge, and should see to how the people will be permanently liberated- thus establishing discursive polarization by signaling the opposite tendency he has in that regard, against his predecessor belonging to the outgroup.

### Meliorist Ideological Trait

Meliorist ideological trait is signal through discursive behavior indicating that human conditions can be enhanced through concerted efforts. This relates to the actions, norms, aims, and values of the governors in a discourse, and their connection to the social circumstance of the people of Osun state. The description of discourse participants in terms of their roles and actions (material process) form elements in the *b-space* where *Theme*, *Process*, *Action*, and *Agent* are composed, thereby connecting the emergent structures of the in-put/out-group polarity within the meliorist ideological trait.

In the following example, Governor Rauf Aregbesola, imbued by meliorist signals, encourages the hearers to the course of new development in the state. He provokes the memory of the hearers with respect to a politician that ruled the Western Region of Nigeria in the past-Obafemi Awolowo. The signaled ideology relating to the possibility of improvement in human conditions through concerted efforts is inherent in the discourse, specifically in the expression: “we are gathered to resume that journey to greatness”.

(4) The *visionary and purposeful leadership* of Chief Obafemi Awolowo once inspired our people in a manner that ignited and unleashed their creative energy. Today, we are *gathered to resume that journey to greatness that our people began with Obafemi Awolowo*. (Rauf Aregbesola)

“*Visionary and purposeful leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo*” as in the text above describes some mental elements in the *s1* and *s2* like the role played by Awolowo and the action he carried out during his reign, which form parts of the blending process by which the emergent structures derive. Members of the structure in turn form the ideological signal indicating polarization. This is evident in the expression that follows: “*we are gathered to resume that journey to greatness that our people began with Obafemi Awolowo*”. The expression suggests how the speaker presents himself as a member of the same group as his hearers’, which is (re)starting a course that is different from the contemporary one.

The possibility of improved general living conditions of the people is also presented in the speeches through expressions that show the positions from which a governor views an issue he raises or some binary ideas he communicates regarding such issue. Hence, meliorist ideological trait is signaled from the speaker’s side of interest against the opposite side. In the example (5) below, Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola raises a social change issue that enjoys currency regarding the Nigerian economy. Oil resources are believed to be winding down and this portends economic downturn for the country and bad consequences on the livelihood of the people of Osun State as Nigerians. However, from the speaker’s perspective, life could yet be made, even, quite better than what obtains with revenues from oil.

(5) Fellow citizens, unlike anybody else might believe, we are mindful of the fact that the favourable trend in the world petroleum prices may not continue forever. An analysis of our economic outlook indicates that *we have fared well in the agriculture sector in the past four years*. However, it is glaring that *we must improve on our efforts by developing, fully, this all-important sector* that has the capacity to sustain our economy. (Olagunsoye Oyinlola)

The governor tries to co-opt hearers to the agriculture initiatives of his administration by implicitly establishing his in-group members of the meliorist ideal. Specifically, *s1* and *s2* are triggered by “*anybody else*”, “*have fared well*” and “*we must improve on our efforts*”- setting off the process of polarization along the Us versus Them conceptions. He explains to hearers that while a particular group still believes in the prospect of oil, they country is challenged by

dwindling oil revenue. However, life could still be made better with concerted efforts from members of his group on agriculture. The main issue in the text is the Nigerian economy which is being threatened by the bad prospect of its main source: “*petroleum prices may not continue forever*”. This threat, in the speaker’s perspective, could be doused if another sector of the economy is developed through collaborative efforts from the people: “*we have fared well in the agriculture sector in the past four years*”. The governor builds this perspective from the effect of agricultural practice in the previous years of his administration. The expression, thus suggests the inability of previous administration to diversify the economy in the past. This is connected by the clausal group of material process (“*indicates*”) - “*An analysis of our economic outlook indicates that we have fared well in the agriculture sector in the past four years*”.

The text shows how the speaker expresses the involvements of his group in the discourse by implicitly presenting the belief that human conditions can be improved through concerted efforts, and how the other group share varying perspective of the revenue source of the state. He reports, describes, narrates, or quotes events and utterances (transitivity processes) that implicitly represent polarization through ideological signals.

### **Reformist Ideological Trait**

This is indicated in expressions that relate to providing solutions to social incorrectness, with the aim of improving the quality of life. It is an idea of gradual change in certain aspects of the society. It is produced in discourses relating to social change issues, ranging from economic, infrastructure, and operational changes. The example below shows how this is signaled in the data in relation to group divergences.

(6) One more time, in the history of our nation- Nigeria, members of the fourth estate of the realm have shown that they are *reliable partners in the struggle for democracy and good governance*. That you stood stoutly in defense of the truth and refused to be compromised, stands you tall as *real men of honor*.

(Rauf Aregbesola).

Governor Aregbesola believes that, apart from the role played by the Nigerian judiciary during the three and half years of litigation at the election tribunal that led to his advent, the media or the Press made significant role in the struggle to correct what he believes was political incorrectness. The clausal group: “*struggle for democracy and good governance*” characterizes actions of and roles played by some discourse participants (“*members of the fourth estate of the realm*”) in the contexts of a specific social situation and period- where ‘situation’ and ‘period’ (vital relations in *ms1* and *ms2*) are cognitively connected to the electoral circumstances (social incorrectness) by which the speaker’s predecessor (Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola) is believed to have assumed office, and the correction of the situation. It is within these two contexts that the sharedness element of (the reformist) ideological trait is established in the sense of the *actors* whom Governor Aregbesola refers to as “*reliable partners in the struggle*” of reformation. This expression indicates polarization of discourse participants through group membership. As members of the society, a group of participants (the Press) shares the idea of reorganization- a deviation from the situation under the speaker’s predecessor.

A deduction is drawn from the text above- that the idea of providing solutions to social incorrectness (reformist ideological trait) serves as the socio-cognitive foundation of polarization through established group membership in the discourse. The actions and practices that characterize this are cognitively inclined since experiences and circumstances relating to the actions and practices are acquired or stored gradually and subconsciously in the mental models

through life experiences, and thus have to be relatively stable. This fact is marked in the text by the clause “*reliable partners in the struggle*”- where the head of the relational elements of the clausal process - “*reliable*”- indicates ‘consistence’ and ‘*regularity*’- hence indicate in-group membership. The out-group polarity derives from the construal representations that are realized from structures in the *g-space* like *theta roles* and ideational representation of the reformation discourse.

Likewise, as the socio-cognitive foundation of polarization (the ingroup and the outgroup) established in the text, the idea of providing solutions to social incorrectness, as signaled in the text, does not arise overnight, nor by the singular circumstance of the electoral incorrectness that forms the background to the text. Previous experiences and discourses are indicated by markers like: “*One more time, in the history of our nation*” in the text that signpost how the reformation idea was acquired by Aregbesola and members of the in-group.

Specifically, the manner by which the governor presents one of the counterpart connections or *vital relations* in the input space (the identity of discourse participants in the text) shows polarization- sharply contrasting between a group that stood against justice and another group that stood on the side of justice. The expression: “*One more time*” (another *vital relation* element) means an experience was being repeated. In the text, the experience of the people during the military regimes is connected to the clausal process which relates the *role* played by the Nigerian Press. The media was consistent in the call for the return of democratic governance. This is evident in the expression where the Governor describes the Nigerian media practitioners as: “*reliable partners in the struggle for democracy and good governance*”. The ideological signal here is suggested by the relational group structure: “*reliable partner*”, where ‘partnership’ points to the idea of trust and cooperation between individuals who, based on the shared idea of providing solutions to social incorrectness (reformist ideological trait), are more likely to pursue a common outcome. Partnership and cooperation in discourse are ideological, hence the foundation of group polarization, where members of the ingroup extend more cooperation to ingroup relations.

The nexuses between group polarizations and the discursive behaviors and actions of participants in a discourse are situated within a signaled ideological characteristic. Precisely, counterpart connections between elements in the two input spaces (*ms1*, *ms2*) like actions and the roles played by participants in a discourse are described, or in the construal sense, *composed* along a particular ideological characterization, as illustrated in the example (7) below.

(7) The events of today are taking place against the backdrop of *the long and brutal military interregnum in the political life of Nigeria during which civil society has virtually lost confidence in its self*, thereby creating the worst impediment to communal progress. Therefore *we are immediately faced* with difficulty of *arousing public opinion on and support for government policies and actions* (Adebisi Akande)

Governor Adebisi Akande tries to present a form of social incorrectness as the circumstantial setting for his inauguration. This is done by foregrounding the “*long and brutal*” actions of members of the military regime (the out-group) that ruled before his advent, and the impacts on the people. The negative effect of the military regime is characterized as social incorrectness, and marked by the adverbial group: “*worst impediment to communal progress*”. This is a negative impact of the *role* played by the military. It is a counterpart connection element that is shared by the two inputs *ms1* and *ms2*, represented in the notation by solid lines. The notation is further connected to the *b-space* where common abstract structures to counterpart

elements relevant to the discourse are composed to derive emergent structures that indicate sharp contrastive group or ideological representations like the idea of providing solutions to the social incorrectness versus actions or activities of individuals related to the incorrectness.

Specifically, this signals the reformist ideological stance of Governor Akande. This is further established by the expression (“*arousing public support*”) which answers the ‘how’ hypothetical question, with respect to the manner by which the reformative actions would be carried out. This marker of the reformist ideology in the text also establishes the socio-cognitive implication and sharedness of ideological characterization. Informed by the fact that there is no personal or private ideological practice, Governor Akande invokes certain elements of the mental models of his hearers that are connected to this particular belief system which are socially shared by them as collective social actors. The connected mental elements are representations of roles, actions and identities of discourse participants as marked by some expressions in the text.

The expressions: “*brutal military interregnum*”, “*society has virtually lost confidence in its self*”, and “*creating the worst impediment*” characterize the out-group; that is, the previous administrations before the advent of Akande’s government in the context of social change issue raised in the text. The instance of social change is presented at the immediate actions that the new administration of the Adebisi Akande set out to accomplish. These actions signal the group belief of social reformation. This is suggested in the expression: “*we are immediately faced with difficulty of arousing public... support for government policies and actions*”. It is observed from the expression that the experience of the people under previous military administration had caused bad social effects on the people. People were no longer interested in government, hence are uncooperative. This was a major social change issue that the new administration of Akande was faced with; that is, to change social orientation of the people of Osun state with respect to supporting government actions and policies. It contrasts him and the group whose practice he is committed to with that of the contrary group.

### **Pessimist Ideological Trait**

This ideological characteristic is signaled in the expressions that describe participants’ mental attitude in relation to the anticipation of undesirable outcome from a given situation. There are instances where social actors are described along group or ideological representations-with members focusing only on the negative side of life in general. Example of this is taken from the speech of Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola who, against his political opponents’ group, describes members of the in-group along the worldview that directly support the notion of progress and what can be considered as the faith-biased claim of optimism.

(8) *Pessimists* would say that heavens would fall or that there would be brimstone and fire. But **we**, who believe in God, hold fast to him in prayer and supplication and God in his infinite mercies has brought us happily to this destination. (Olagunsoye Oyinlola)

The text above represents the socio-cognitive foundation of ideological polarity. Its initial part suggests an antithesis of positivity and general hopefulness. This contrasts with the outlook that there is a balance of good and pleasure in life. The text characterizes the gradually acquired negative mental attitude of the out-group members whom Governor Oyinlola describes as “*pessimists*” that believe in, or anticipate a detrimental outcome from a social situation. A cognitive connection is established here- in terms of the negative temperament of Oyinlola’s adversary which would have had negative effects on all major aspects of their cognition. This is marked by the expression: “*would say that heavens would fall or that there would be brimstone*

*and fire*”, which suggests the acquired experiences of Oyinlola’s adversary which formed their pessimist characterization.

Contrastively, the other part of the text suggests that an ideological trait, gradually developed by group members, can split. Within the social context of the text above, the discourse participants are the people of Osun State, including the electorate and the politicians as well as their supporters- all of who practice the general faith-based belief that have become the generally accepted attitude, or common sense, as in the expression: “*we, who believe in God*”. The connection between this general faith-based attitude of the people and the ideological signal establishes the disintegration amongst the discourse participants; that is, between members of the out-group (“*pessimists*”) and those of the in-group (“*we*”).

### **Prejudiced Ideological Trait**

Prejudiced in discourse refers to a negative evaluation of another person based on perceived group membership. Generally, it is a favorable or unfavorable feeling expressed towards a person or a group prior to, or not based on actual experience or role. In the example below, the speaker generally blames the military for the habit of laziness and irresponsibility of many Nigerian youths, even when a popular decree against financial crime was promulgated during the military era. He expresses unfavorable feeling towards military regimes, not necessarily based on the experience of the decree set up by the same military government against social and financial malpractices. A commonly shared belief is expressed that military governments set the tone for social decadence.

(9) Very many children that were born since independence in 1960 have therefore begun to pick their heroes from the *new wealthy soldiers and their wealthy contractors*. The children too have begun to cultivate the *habit of seeking wealth without work* (Adebisi Akande)

The evaluation of participants in the text, based on their perceived group membership, is characterized by “*were born*”, “*have therefore begun to pick*”, and “*have begun to cultivate*”, all of which are clausal groups of material process which equally connect to the prejudiced ideological representations. The actions being described through these invocators of *ms* elements are deliberately deployed by Governor Adebisi Akande to present morality issue as take-off for polarization of group. The description of some of the participants in the text as “*new wealthy soldiers*” signals the attitude of prejudice- a kind of idea system that developed in the mental models of the Nigerian politicians and civilians generally, who clamored for democratic rule. It is a negative evaluation of their economic status which, in the latter expression, is described as not worked for. This is marked by the item that introduces another material process, “*too*”.

The actions that signal prejudice in the text are marked by expressions like “*the new wealthy soldiers and their wealthy contractors*”, “*many children...have begun to pick their heroes*”, “*have begun to cultivate the habit of seeking wealth without work*”. They suggest a belief system of Governor Akande as a member of the political group with regards to the effect of the military regimes on the people. This system of belief is socially shared by the collectivity of the Nigerian politicians as social actors.

The social representation essence of ideology is thus established, considering how the social identity of the Nigerian politicians, like Governor Akande, is characterized by their negative evaluation of the military regime based on certain deliberate social lifestyles and activities of some Nigerians. In essence, the shared belief system of prejudice ideology thus controlled

Governor Akande's attitude about how the "very many children that were born since independence in 1960" in Nigeria deliberately chose "the habit of seeking wealth without work".

The cognitive perspective of the signaled prejudice traits is in terms of ideological coherence- that is, how members of Akande's in-group acquire and use the system of negative evaluation of members of the outgroup within adversarial contexts. Within the mental models of members, the in-group, the good aspects or representations of the out-group must be considered from the negative social impact and must be so interpreted and constructed prior to, or not based on actual experience.

### **Pietist Ideological Trait**

Piety is a virtue which may include religious devotion, spirituality, or a mixture of both. A common conception of piety is humility. Pietist ideological trait refers to virtuous attitude showing high moral standards, including spirituality and religious devotion. It is discussed in terms of polarization along the basic religious or spiritual group behavioral representations of discourse participants. These kinds of representations reflect the knowledge and attitude of the group. Religious attitudes by which discourse participants are characterized in the data are influenced by the pietist ideological signals. This is manifested by the clausal categories that are connected to the attitudes expressed in discursive behavioral patterns.

Clausal groups connected to pietist trait are observed within religious or God discourses, whereby a governor presents the issue of divine support. This suggests a specific behavioral representation of the people of Osun State. This is evident in the opening expressions in each the inaugural speeches.

(10) *I am most grateful to God Almighty* for making this ceremony possible. *I am* very grateful to all the people of Osun State for electing me as the new governor of the state. (Adebisi Akande)

(11) *It is with gratitude to God Almighty* and appreciation of the support of the good people of this state that I address you today on this auspicious occasion of the inauguration of our administration. (Olagunsoye Oyinlola)

(12) *It is with deep humility and gratitude to the Almighty* that I stand before this faithful assembly. (Rauf Aregbesola)

First, the clausal elements of the God discourse in the three texts bear relational process which functionally characterizes the religious or spiritual behavioral representations of the governors. This particular representation is derived from shared attitude or behavior as members of social groups. It comes from shared opinion about the religious inclination of the people of Osun State, which affects the production and comprehension of the discourse, as well as the mental models of the governors and their hearers.

The presentation of the pietist characterization, as in the three texts is related to the knowledge about divine issue or divine situation which the governors share with their hearers, hence contrasting themselves with their adversaries. It is part of the social beliefs that are certified, shared and therefore presupposed discursively by the people of Osun State. Specifically, pietist trait in this study is observed as a relation of general cultural knowledge which a discourse participant share and displays discursively as a member of a group. This is further observed in the examples below.

(13) It has pleased God *to make* the people of Osun State of Nigeria to elect me. (Adebisi Akande)

(14) This goal would be pursued with all the intellect that God *has endowed* us with. (Olagunsoye Oyinlola).

(15) God *has bequeathed* to us the freedom of choice. (Rauf Aregbesola)

The clausal elements “*to make*”, “*has endowed*”, and “*has bequeathed*” bear material process that shows that somebody carried out certain actions, or is responsible for certain activities. In the opinion of Governor Akande, which is shared by the people, ‘God inspired the people of Osun State to elect him during the polls. The same is observed about Oyinlola who expresses the belief that ‘the ideas required to rule the state successfully can only come from God’; and Aregbesola expresses the special gift that God gave to the people of Osun State, including him. All of these relate to knowledge about divinity which they all leverage as ground of polarization. At the advent of each of them, they signal faith group membership, most often, coopting their hearers into the group- situating other discourse participants within the out-group. Specifically, they present all religious appeal discourses, situated within the divine support issues which form a part of the socially shared and certified beliefs of the people of Osun State.

### Conclusions

This article has established that the gubernatorial inaugural speech like those of governors Adebisi Akande, Olagunsoye Oyinlola, and Rauf Aregbesola of Osun State, Nigeria comprises polarizations in terms of patriotic and oppositional discourses. These are established within six sorts of ideological traits- discovered in the self-schema of the ideological groups which each of the governors and other discourse participants belong. They are (re)presented either implicitly or explicitly, specifically or generally along group practices or beliefs, and within the knowledge or information that the governors and others are identified with, or represented. These are signaled through four transitivity processes- that is clausal groups expressing how the governors attribute actions to participants; how they describe discourse participants’ experiences and roles; how they relate cognitive interpretation of happenings; and how they quote participants’ role in their speeches.

The contribution of the study to the scholarship of political inaugural discourses is in terms of the socio-cognitive accounts of polarizations according to signaled ideological traits. This new micro-range discursive behavior and characterizations could be adopted to describe the distinctive features of focal political individual(s) in a text, and therefore enrich the accounts of discourse features in inaugural speeches. It also establishes the socio-cognitive approach of CDA as critical success factor (Rockart, 1979) to an elaborate examination of activities of discourse participants in inaugural speeches. This approach informs the establishment and illustration of what van Dijk (2006) refers to as the “operational ground of meaning negotiations” between the local societal structures (social cognition) and the discourse structures (personal cognition) in the governorship inaugural speeches. This study thus addresses the argument that “there is no access to the state of the mind” (Van Dijk 2001:87) of discourse participants in a political text. This position is connected to the observed lacuna in extant works of inaugural speeches which focus on the public dimension of discourse, leaving out the inner or mental element. Consequently, by its socio-cognitive approach, this article provides insights into the establishment and illustration of meaning negotiation ground between the episodic mental models and other personal representations of discourse participants.

The application of this study is relevant to political speech writers and the governors and presidents who address the citizens through a prepared political text. It would provide specific ideas of discourse structures and elements for them, by which an inaugural speech must be

structured in order to achieve the goal of influencing hearers' social interest and actions. It will also be beneficial to the electorate in determining the ideological positions of a politician, hence their leadership tendencies.

It has concentrated on the inaugural speeches of some democratically elected governors in Nigeria, thus restricted to this scope of the analytical data on the basis of documentation and the duration of the regimes of the governors (1999-2018). Therefore, the study is restricted to representations that relate the social structures and characterizations of a state within the Western region of the country and its civilian rulers in terms of the social issues raised, the ideological signals espoused, and the discursive group separation carried out.

Further research may dwell on the stylistic features in another inaugural speeches or other political texts with the objective of explaining the distinctive ways by which the governors or other political leader structure discourses and how the features connect to the understanding and evaluation of expressions in the text's socio-cognitively.

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