

## A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE AND POWER IN PRESIDENT BUHARIS'S #ENDSARS SPEECH

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### ABSTRACT

Language is the most fundamental medium of communication whether spoken, written, demonstrated or indicated in any other form, for the purpose of expression and bonding. It builds social constructions and promotes group relationships in the society. Language is also an instrument of power and dominance by the people in civil, military or political authority to fulfil and enforce their governance objectives and perhaps other personal interests. The way we make use of language speaks volumes of a person's choice of discourse style towards any important issue whether political social, local, national and international. The crux of this study is to trace and identify the nexus between language and power, especially among persons exposed to high political influence and to establish if any abuse of language has occurred in this particular language instance of a national broadcast made by Nigeria's president in the month of October, 2020. Finding shows that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a strong approach that is used to challenge and resist the excessive use of power, oppression and inequality prevailing in the society.

**Keywords:** Language, power, dominance, critical discourse analysis, #EndSARS.

### 1. Introduction

Language is the most important medium of communication by which human beings express their thoughts, inner feelings and experiences. All human societies and social institutions are made possible only by man's possession of language. Language plays a very important role in any man's action especially in politics and governance. It is a key factor in building a strong relationship between the government and the people. The way we make use of language speaks volumes of a person's choice of discourse style towards any important issue whether political social, local, national or international. Our speeches can emerge from diverse backgrounds of culture, economy, power, education, social awareness and politics.

Ahmad et al (2001), in their contribution to the concept of language opined that:

Every Language finds its ways in discourse and in order to understand a speech or a text, it is very necessary to get into the depth of that very spoken or written text and go for the context of it. Because unless the text is seen as having more than surface meaning, it would not be easy to get real meaning and understand the motive and intention of the speaker.

Language provides the bedrock for discourse which can be undertaken in an oral, written, acted or whatsoever form of representing thoughts, ideas or intentions in a human encounter. Discourse forms structures, conveys meaning, and accomplishes actions (Schiffrin, 1994). However, using a language involves something that goes beyond the acquisition of structures and the ability to make appropriate choices in the realization of the particular language functions". (Yalden, 1987). It follows therefore that a language user should be able to apply the structural rules he has acquired (which signifies linguistic competence), to communicate effectively and meaningfully (which signifies communicative competence). While some sets of discourse are of personal significance, some are of national importance (Adedun, 2014). The speech of President Buhari being investigated in this study is a good example of discourse type of national significance. Such speeches should be carefully crafted to deliberately meet the yearnings and aspirations of the majority of the populace at any point in time.

Language builds social constructions and promotes group relationships in the society. It is also an instrument of power and dominance by the people in civil, military or political authority to fulfil and enforce their governance objectives and perhaps other personal interests. One major aim of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the exploration of how power abuse, dominance and force are enacted in the society. It is against this backdrop that this study examines how President Muhammadu Buhari used language to exercise his power and dominance in his #EndSARS national address and how this communicative strategy subjected the speech to wide media criticism and public condemnation.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical model employed for the analysis of data in this study is Critical Discourse Analysis. CDA is a broad and complex interdisciplinary theory or methodology for engaging different discourses and research issues. It is a relatively recent school of discourse that concerns itself with relations of power and inequality in language encounters. A language encounter may tend to have certain meanings which are not always transparent. CDA plays an important role in making those meanings known by revealing some of the ideas that are hidden in a spoken or written medium. Buttressing this assertion, Thompson (2002) states that "... a critical approach to discourse seeks to link the text (micro level) with the underlying power structures in the society (macro sociocultural practice level) through discursive practices upon which the text was drawn (micro level)".

CDA explicitly intends to incorporate social-theoretical insights into analyzing discourses and also advocates social commitment and interventionism in research. According to Wodak, (1997):

CDA studies real, and often extended, instances of social interactions

which may take (a partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view, on one hand, the relationship between language and society, and on the other, the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed.

In the view of Ahmad et al (2012), one more important perspective concerned by CDA about “power”, is that it is very rare chance that a text is a work of only one individual. There exists in texts certain evidence which, if observed through a critical eye, clearly shows the ideologies of those who intend to struggle for dominance.

In the view of Pennycook (2001) CDA “is a way of viewing language use as part of a critical analysis of social context. For Titscher et al (2000), “CDA sees itself as politically involved research”. This implies that CDA is concerned with resolving many social issues such as political, interpersonal, power sharing or power use and abuse among several others. Power, which is one of its major concepts deals with analysing the language of people in relative or absolute power and those who sustain or create inequalities in a language situation in the society. Moreover, CDA researchers have consistently shown interest in investigating how individuals use discourse to exercise power and domination over others and how those dominated groups attempt to resist such domination.

Van Dijk, (2001) maintains that (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research tool that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. Using this tool, he views language as a form of social practice and it focuses on how social and political dominance are represented in both written and spoken discourses. Power, with its linguistic application is therefore a very important concept in CDA.

As a matter of fact, a lingo-political aim of CDA might be said to be reforming the society and attempting to create an illumination in the paths of suppressed groups of people, pointing an awareness to the injustices being perpetrated against the oppressed groups and encouraging them to resist such injustices in order to transform their lives and perhaps secure a desired standard of living.

The application of CDA in the investigation of language and power in President Muhammadu Buhari's speech is considered a very appropriate approach to achieving the desired objective of this study. Our major concern here is to carry out a critical analysis of the whole speech/text in order to find out traces of social and political power abuse, dominance, force and subjugation in the speech. This requires the application of method of text and discourse. Titscher et al (2000) referred to method of text and discourse as “a technique for making interference by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of message”. Applying this technique with the theoretical model of CDA would reveal the agenda and the hidden motives of the Federal government to suppress the agitations of Nigerian youths. The reactions, remarks and comments of Nigerians on the speech would also be considered with the application of CDA. The analysis will also examine the implications of the President's speech and the remarks of the people on the unity, peace and the political future of the country.

### **3. Background of #EndSARS Protests**

The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (codenamed SARS) was formed in 1992 to particularly tackle the surging wave of crimes in Nigeria. SARS was one of the 14 units in the Force Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department which was established to detain, investigate, and prosecute people involved in crimes like armed robbery, kidnapping, and other violent crimes. It was later changed to Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS) in 2018. Due to the alarming rate of internet fraudsters and cultism in Nigerian universities, SARS operatives invariably infiltrated the society and Nigerian universities and made several successful arrests, but in the process became too controversial for its link to the harassment of innocent people, extra judicial killings, extortion, torture, home invasions, rape and many acts of impunity and lawlessness largely committed especially in the southern parts of Nigeria.

A September 2016 report published by the Amnesty International accused the SARS operatives of extensive use of torture and detainment of people without trial. Following several reports of human rights violation, on 14 August 2018, the Acting President of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, ordered with immediate effect the "overhaul" of the controversial police unit SARS. The public outcry and complaints against SARS and efforts by the government to reform this controversial police unit did not yield any positive results as police brutality against innocent Nigerians went on unabated.

In December 2017, Segun Awosanya spearheaded an online advocacy campaign demanding an end to SARS brutality in the country. The campaign, which started on the social media from the hashtag #EndSARS, expanded to mass street protests in most parts of the country. In addition to putting an end to the brutality of this anti-robbery squad, protesters made a 5-point demand also known as 5 for 5. These demands included the immediate release of all arrested protesters, justice for all deceased victims of police brutality and appropriate compensation for their families amongst others. The campaign and protests received the attention of the international community with the reportage by the international media. The peaceful EndSARS protesters were dispersed with tear gas by the police and in several instances attacked, beaten, and injured by thugs and hoodlums, believed to have been hired by government functionaries as various video clips went viral showing how vehicles that looked like unmarked government vehicles, with dark-goggled well-suited mean-looking men dropped arm-bearing rascally-looking persons at the scenes of the peaceful protests, obviously to attack the protesters. However, the peaceful protesters always returned to the sites of their protests, sometimes arresting some of the hoodlums and extracting confessions out of them. At the height of provocation, the protesters took their protests to the Police Force Headquarters, national and state houses of assembly and state government offices.

On the night of Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 2020. Men of the Nigerian Armed Forces were drafted to, and fired shots into the crowd of unarmed and unprotected EndSARS protesters at the Lekki toll gate leaving several people dead and many injured, according to real time viral video clips, television news reports, eye-witness accounts and the Amnesty International reports. The Nigerian authorities however denied the claims insisting there were no fatalities but that 25 people were wounded. This sad occurrence which is popularly

referred to as the Lekki Massacre and black Tuesday will never be forgotten in the history of Nigeria. The Lekki killings led to violence and wanton destruction of both private and government properties as hoodlums hijacked the peaceful protests.

Following the unrest and violence that erupted in the country resulting from the unprovoked attack on the protesters, President Muhammed Buhari later reluctantly addressed the nation on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 2020. The address was received with public condemnation as it was perceived to have come too late since the protest had already lasted over twelve days and the shootings had also lasted over forty-eight hours without a word from the President.

#### **4. Text of President Buhari #EndSARS Speech**

##### **ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MUHAMMADU BUHARI, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON THE #ENDSARS PROTESTS, 22ND OCTOBER, 2020.**

(1). Fellow Nigerians, it has become necessary for me to address you having heard from many concerned Nigerians and having concluded a meeting with all the Security Chiefs. (2). I must warn those who have hijacked and misdirected the initial, genuine and well - intended protest of some of our youths in parts of the country, against the excesses of some members of the now disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). (3). On Monday 12th October, I acknowledged the genuine concerns and agitations of members of the public regarding the excessive use of force by some members of SARS. (4). The choice to demonstrate peacefully is a fundamental right of citizens as enshrined in Section 40 of our Constitution and other enactments; but this right to protest also imposes on the demonstrators the responsibility to respect the rights of other citizens, and the necessity to operate within the law. (5). As a democratic government, we listened to, and carefully evaluated the five-point demands of the protesters. And, having accepted them, we immediately scrapped SARS, and put measures in place to address the other demands of our youth. (6). On approving the termination of SARS, I already made it clear that it was in line with our commitment to the implementation of extensive Police reforms. (7). Sadly, the promptness with which we have acted seemed to have been misconstrued as a sign of weakness and twisted by some for their selfish unpatriotic interests. (8). The result of this is clear to all observers: human lives have been lost; acts of sexual violence have been reported; two major correctional facilities were attacked and convicts freed; public and private properties completely destroyed or vandalised; the sanctity of the Palace of a Peace Maker, the Oba of Lagos has been violated. So-called protesters have invaded an International Airport and in the process disrupted the travel plans of fellow Nigerians and our visitors. (9). All these executed in the name of the ENDSARS protests. I am indeed deeply pained that innocent lives have been lost. These tragedies are uncalled for and unnecessary. Certainly, there is no way whatsoever to connect these bad acts to legitimate expression of grievance of the youth of our country. (10). The spreading of deliberate falsehood and misinformation through the social media in particular, that this government is oblivious to the pains and plight of its citizens is a ploy to mislead the unwary within and outside Nigeria into unfair judgement and disruptive behaviour. (11). On the contrary, both our deeds and words have shown how committed this administration has been to the wellbeing and welfare of citizens, even with the steadily dwindling revenues, and the added responsibilities and restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic. (12). Government has put in place measures and initiatives principally targeted at youths, women and the most vulnerable groups in our society. These included our broad plan to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in the next 10 years; the creation of N75 billion National Youth Investment Fund to provide opportunities for the youths and the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Survival Fund, through which government is: a. paying

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three months salaries of the staff of 100,000 micro, small - and medium - enterprises, b. paying for the registration of 250,000 businesses at the Corporate Affairs Commission .c. giving a grant of N30,000 to 100,000 artisans; guaranteeing market for the products of traders. (13). These are in addition to many other initiatives such as; a. Farmermoni, b. Tradermoni, c. Marketmoni, d. N-Power, e. N-Tech and f. N-Agro. (14). No Nigerian Government in the past has methodically and seriously approached poverty-alleviation like we have done. (15). With regard to the welfare of police personnel, the National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission has been directed to expedite action on the finalization of the new salary structure of members of the Nigeria Police Force. The emoluments of other paramilitary services are also being reviewed upwards. (16). In order to underscore the importance of education in preparing youths for the future, this administration has come up with a new salary structure and other incentives for our teachers. (17). Let me at this point reaffirm the Federal Government's commitment to preserving the unity of this country. (18). We will continue to improve good governance and our democratic process, including through sustained engagement. (19). We shall continue to ensure that liberty and freedom, as well as the fundamental rights of all citizens are protected. (20). But remember that government also has the obligation to protect lives and properties, as well as the right of citizens to go about their daily businesses freely and protected from acts of violence. (21). To our neighbours in particular, and members of the international community, many of whom have expressed concern about the ongoing development in Nigeria, we thank you and urge you all to seek to know all the facts available before taking a position or rushing to judgment and making hasty pronouncements. (22). In the circumstances, I would like to appeal to protesters to note and take advantage of the various well-thought-out initiatives of this administration designed to make their lives better and more meaningful, and resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos with the aim of truncating our nascent democracy. (23). For you to do otherwise will amount to undermining national security and the law and order situation. Under no circumstances will this be tolerated. (24). I therefore call on our youths to discontinue the street protests and constructively engage government in finding solutions. Your voice has been heard loud and clear and we are responding. (25). And I call on all Nigerians to go about their normal businesses, and enjoin security agencies to protect lives and properties of all law abiding citizens without doing harm to those they are meant to protect. Let me pay tribute to officers of the Nigeria Police Force who have tragically lost their lives in the line of duty. (26). I would like to thank those state Governors, traditional and religious leaders who have appealed for calm and restraint. I also thank youth leaders who have restrained their followers from taking the law into their hands. (27). This government respects and will continue to respect all the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people, but it will not allow anybody or groups to disrupt the peace of our nation. Thank you all. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

## **5. Methodology**

The primary source of data was the #EndSARS speech of President Muhammadu Buhari delivered on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 2020. In addition to this address, the method of gathering relevant information involved collating reactions and comments of Nigerians and international community from Nigerian newspapers and the internet. The address was presented in clauses to make the analysis effective and easier to read. The method adopted for the analysis of data was largely descriptive and interpretative. In the analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis was employed to explore how the President used language and power to threaten the protesters thereby subjecting the address to public condemnation.

## **6. Data Analysis and Discussion**

The speech opens with the President providing the information on the series of consultations he had had with concerned Nigerians and the country's security chiefs on the #EndSARS protests that shook the country to its root for two weeks and which almost brought the country to total disintegration. In the statement that follows, the President acknowledged the fact that the protests were indeed peaceful before being hijacked. But then comes some utterances in the statements which, which under analysis, show the president threatening the protesters, "I must warn those who have hijacked and misdirected the initial, genuine and well-intended protest of some of our youths in parts of the country, against the excesses of some members of the now disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS)". This warning statement is an indication of the use of power and dominance by the President. But in the eyes of CDA, this warning is not just a simple statement but it is something greatly related with dominance and superiority. The statement reveals, obviously, that the government accepts the protests to be genuine and well-intentioned. Our linguistic tool reveals how those in power maintain their superiority over the people they govern and how they ensure their subjugation. This statement is not a warning to the protesters only but to the entire nation.

The President recognized the fundamental rights of the citizens to express their views as entrenched in the constitution of the country. Exercising their freedom of expression should however be done within the ambit of the law and without trampling upon the fundamental rights of other citizens. The President tried to show that his government has listening ears by scrapping SARS and accepting the five point demands of the protesters, "As a democratic government, we listened to, and carefully evaluated the five-point demands of the protesters. And, having accepted them, we immediately scrapped SARS, and put measures in place to address the other demands of our youth". The President's statement, if subjected to CDA interpretation, is considered as a mere political statement. The sincerity of government is put into question as the citizens have lost confidence in the government as that was not the first time SARS was disbanded in Nigeria only to resurface again. This was the reason why the protests continued even after the announcement of the scrapping of SARS.

The President claimed that he acknowledged the protests to be genuine and well-intended again needs to be subjected to critical analysis and interpretation, "On approving the termination of SARS, I already made it clear that it was in line with our commitment to the implementation of extensive Police reforms. Sadly, the promptness with which we have acted seemed to have been misconstrued as a sign of weakness and twisted by some for their selfish unpatriotic interests". By acknowledging the protests to be 'genuine and well-intended' on the one hand, and on the other hand referring to the agitations of the protesters as 'selfish and unpatriotic interests', the President exhibits the character of a typical Nigerian politician who speaks with two mouths.

The reasons for the #EndSARS protests were far beyond the five point demands. Nigerian youths were tired of the insensitivity of the government to their plights and considered their generation as a ruined one as a result of bad governance. Hence, part of their agitation is good governance that will provide employment, security, food, and qualitative education to the citizens. In defense

of his government as being responsive to the plights of the people especially the youths, the President mentioned the various efforts of his government to ameliorate the sufferings of the people and better the lives of the youths, "...both our deeds and words have shown how committed this administration has been to the wellbeing and welfare of citizens, even with the steadily dwindling revenues, and the added responsibilities and restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Government has put in place measures and initiatives principally targeted at youths, women and the most vulnerable groups in our society". But the above mentioned fragments of his speech are perceived by Nigerians as superficial statements as many of such promises have not been kept in the last seven years of the President's regime. It is this insincerity and the multifarious problems bedeviling the country that actually triggered off the protests.

In the President's address, he reiterates the commitment of his government to protect the fundamental rights of the citizens and preserve the unity of the country, "Let me at this point reaffirm the Federal Government's commitment to preserving the unity of this country. We will continue to improve good governance and our democratic process, including through sustained engagement. We shall continue to ensure that liberty and freedom, as well as the fundamental rights of all citizens are protected". Here again we need to apply CDA and get into the depth of these statements and reach to the real meanings which are otherwise hidden and not easily understandable. For instance, the President's statement "Let me at this point reaffirm the Federal Government's commitment to preserving the unity of this country" is implied. It is noticeable in this statement that President Buhari looks like believing in his own orders and directions, not giving due consideration to the voice of the people. And this looks like the government tends to imbalance the power relation with the citizens. What is hidden in the President's statement of his commitment to preserve the unity of the country was later revealed with the way and manner the government handled the protests. On Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 2020, the Nigerian army attacked the unarmed protesters at Lekki tollgate with live bullets resulting into the killings of many youths and leaving hundreds injured. It was this massacre that led to violent protests in many parts of the country the subsequent days. This sad event which attracted public outrage and international condemnations and which is referred to as Lekki killings/black Tuesday would never be forgotten in the history of Nigeria.

The story is just not over as there comes many more evidence in the text which show power and dominance in the President speech, "But remember that government also has the obligation to protect lives and properties, as well as the right of citizens to go about their daily businesses freely and protected from acts of violence. To our neighbours in particular, and members of the international community, many of whom have expressed concern about the ongoing development in Nigeria, we thank you and urge you all to seek to know all the facts available before taking a position or rushing to judgment and making hasty pronouncements". The above statements show the President's intolerance to criticism as he accused the international community of 'rushing to judgment' and 'making hasty pronouncements'. These statements are considered examples of excessive and wrong use of power by the President.



And CDA helps us understand the social problems, inequality and excessive use of one's power and superiority over others.

There are also other statements in the President's address which are strong enough to attract the attention of CDA scholars. For example, "In the circumstances, I would like to appeal to protesters to note and take advantage of the various well-thought-out initiatives of this administration designed to make their lives better and more meaningful, and resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos with the aim of truncating our nascent democracy. For you to do otherwise will amount to undermining national security and the law and order situation. Under no circumstances will this be tolerated". If viewed deeply there in these statements, the determination of the Nigerian government to stop the protests and suppress the voice of the people. Using words like 'subversive elements'; 'to cause chaos'; 'truncating our nascent democracy'; 'undermining national security'; 'under no circumstances will this be tolerated' is a strategy adopted to intimidate the protesters and force them to surrender. Judging these very fragments of his speech it might be said that they were not at all neutral statements and contained power and dominance which people in government use to show their strength and will to exercise power whenever they feel to do so. If above mentioned statements are left unchallenged then power relation and excessive use of dominance by the people in power can create many problems for the society.

President Buhari concludes the speech with a statement which confirms his use of power, dominance, and threat in relation to the protesters and the entire people of Nigeria. "This government respects and will continue to respect all the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people, but it will not allow anybody or groups to disrupt the peace of our nation". At the surface level this statement is not that dangerous but its critical analysis may make it prominent and questionable. The phrase, "but it will not allow anybody or groups to disrupt the peace of our nation" is a statement of threat that shows signs of over dominance and power abuse which according to CDA needs to be resisted. Power relations can be at risk if such statements are made by the nation's President without being challenged. It shows that the freedom of expression and fundamental rights of the people were being challenged through the words of those who have power and this time the protesters and Nigerian youths seem to be the victim of such oppression and injustice.

The nature of this address delivered by President Buhari at the peak of the #EndSARS protests makes CDA an interesting task. The killings of the youths carried out by the military at Lekki tollgate during the protests attracted national and international condemnations. Despite the gravity of the killings and public outcry and condemnations, the President did not say anything about the shootings in his address. This is considered by CDA as act of oppression, suppression and subjugation.

## **6. Implications and Conclusion**

The #EndSARS address by the President actually generated a lot of reactions and public condemnations as the address did not meet the expectations of most Nigerians and the international community. The speech was not delivered at the right time and when it eventually came, it was received with wide

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condemnation. the President was accused of insensitivity to the plight of the masses as the speech was embedded with a tone of authority and power, subjugation and was absolutely impassionate. The President was not only accused of using threat and derogative statements to intimidate the protesters and suppress the voice of the people, he was also berated for his silence on the Lekki tollgate shootings. It was alleged that the President deliberately kept mute on the killings to undermine the gravity of the bloodshed. Those who condemned the President's address included local and international media, eminent Nigerians, individuals, groups, religious organizations, politicians and international organisations.

Reacting to the President's address, a Nigerian blogger and columnist, Japheth Omojuwa said that President Muhammadu Buhari's address to the nation "missed the point by a wide margin". According to him "the President will be remembered for threatening Nigerians just because they asked their government to commit to justice".

A religious leader, Apostle Johnson Suleman also reacted to the speech by describing it as insensitive and useless as he said, "Never had a more wasted 12 minutes all my life...insensitive and useless speech ...who gave the order for people to be killed? ...What's the repercussions of such blatant impunity? Nobody was fired for lives wasted? No compensation for victims' families. I wish I can unwatched it..." (Vanguard: 2020).

A diaspora group, Yoruba One Voice (YOV) also condemned the killings of peaceful protesters in Lekki area of Lagos State describing the act as genocide.

The retired General Evangelist World-wide, Christ Apostolic Church, Prophet Samuel Abiola condemned the killings of the protesters by suspected military man and appeal to the government to stop the use of force.

Nigeria best-selling author, Chiamanda Adiche also condemned the President speech when she stated in a piece titled, "The Address President Buhari Could Have Given: A Speculative Piece" (Punch Newspaper: 2020). She noted that the President should have acknowledged the killings of peaceful protesters, accepted the blame for it and ordered an immediate investigation.

Political leaders who are also part of the government jettison sentiment and join in the condemnation of the President's address. Ndudi Elumelu, the minority leader in a press release titled: "#EndSARS President Buhari's Speech Leaves Much to be Desired", said the minority caucus expected the address by the President to come with some empathy for the victims of the killings and other acts of brutality by unscrupulous security operatives, particularly at this time when soothing words from the President would have gone a long way to calm frayed nerves. The statement partly read: "Indeed, the expectation across Nigeria was for Mr. President to reassure Nigerians, especially the Youths, by forcefully condemning the killing and brutalization of our young ones, announcing an accelerated independent of inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the gruesome acts and setting a clear pathway for the much needed overall of our security system" (Punch Newspaper: 2020).

As earlier stated, the aim of CDA is to resist power abuse, dominance and inequality in the society. This comes to play in this study as the public condemnations of the President's address forced him to succumb to pressure as

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he later addressed the issue of the killings of the protesters. Addressing the issue for the first time having been criticized for ignoring the incident in his recent national broadcast, President spokesman, Garbu Sheu in a statement titled “Peaceful Protesters who lost their Lives will get Justice” said President Buhari did not want to speak on Lekki killings until he has all the facts. He also assured that following the setting up of a judicial panel of inquiry by the Lagos State government, security men who were murdered and property owners whose assets were vandalized and looted will also get justice. The statement reads: “As the judicial panel of inquiry set up by the Lagos State Government, one of the more than a dozen states to do so, starts sitting on Monday, President Muhammadu Buhari has expressed his full support and optimism that it will assist the nation to give justice to peaceful protesters who lost their lives, security men who were murdered and property owners whose assets were vandalized and looted” (Nigerian Tribune: 2020) .

The above reactions and condemnations of the President’s address and the subsequent statement issued by the President on the sensitive issue of the killings of protesters he earlier ignored in his address are all in line with CDA which major task is to analyse a text, unravel its meanings for the purpose of resisting power abuse and dominance. Those in power always have some hidden motives and ideologies which they adopt to serve their purposes and fulfill their self-interests. As demonstrated in this work, those who are in power use words and speech to prosecute their hidden agendas in order to maintain their superiority. The Study has shown that CDA plays significant role in challenging and resisting the excessive use of power, oppression and inequality prevailing in the society.

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