Ideological Positioning in Primetime TV News Presentations in Ghana

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Abstract

This study investigates ideological positioning in the four TV stations' primetime news presentations in Ghana. The study explores linguistic resources that enact ideological positioning in the primetime TV news presentations. It begins with ideological positioning in evaluative resources, it proceeds to ideological positioning in semiotics and ideological positioning through other linguistic features through the lens of Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005). It became clear that linguistic resources in primetime TV news presentations enact different ideological positioning for subjects of the news.

Keywords: Appraisal, Ideology, Primetime news, Positioning, Television

Introduction

The dominance of research into written and broadcast news has been largely spearheaded by Martin and White (2005), Merminod and Burger (2019), Montgomery (2007), and Thompson and Hunston (2006). These studies have made valuable contributions to the discourse of broadcast news (Montgomery, 2007), evaluation of language in written news (Martin & White, 2005; Thompson & Hunston, 2006) and linguistic narrative experience of the process of broadcast news (Merminod, 2018; Merminod & Burger, 2019). Unlike the pre - 20th century when studies of broadcast news focused on written news (Bell, 1994; Bell, 1991), researchers, such as Arackal (2015), Bednarek (2010) and Montgomery (2007) have explored spoken and broadcast news, specifically, radio and television discourses, in the European contexts (Merminod, 2018; Merminod & Burger, 2019). In the African context, scholars have investigated language use in both electronic and print media from their various societies. Nwaneri, Mann, Niekerk and Dieperinle (2014), for instance, studied the use of English language in electronic media and how it is used in accordance with South Africa's (SA) language policy. It was obvious in this study that like in many African countries, English language is preferred in presenting news and other information on radio and television broadcasting networks in South Africa, which is contrary to South Africa's language policy. In Nigeria (arguably, the most popular African country), Agu (2015) pays attention to one of the issues that, unfortunately, makes Nigeria popular – corruption. He explores linguistic features in three daily newspapers that make journalists in Nigeria nation builders. He investigates linguistic features in the reportage of a 300-million-Naira scandal that had to do with the daughter of Nigeria's former president, Obasanjo. Interestingly, while some journalists reported objectively by distancing themselves, others reported this same scandal story from an emotionally biased point of view. Like Agu's (2015) study, the

current study examines evaluative resources that subjects of news employ in Ghana's primetime news to make them report objectively, by distancing themselves. However, unlike Nigeria, as reported in Agu's (2015) study, instances of emotional biases are not used in Ghana's primetime news, which suggests a difference in linguistic choices in electronic and print media within different African countries. In Ghana, studies on language of the news have examined segments of the news. For example, Boamah (2016) analysed language use in Ghana's sports news segment while Amadu et al. (2018); Davor (2015); Nyarko (2016) and Sikanku (2011) paid attention to written news in Ghana's print media. Studies by Agu (2015); Amadu et al. (2018); Nwaneri et al. (2014) and Sikanku (2011), predominantly adopted a narrative ethnographic approach to the study of language of the news at the expense of appraisal, which reveals how the textual voice positions itself with respect to other voices and other positions in the discourse (Martin & White, 2005). In this light, the present study should be viewed as a contribution to studies on ideology in language of spoken news on TV.

It is worth mentioning that ideological positioning in the media has gained centrality in political discourse in recent times (Cakmak, 2018; Merminod, 2018). Lylo (2016), for instance, has examined the communicative nature of ideology in the media and explains that "basic paradigms of communication are ideologically marked." Lylo (2016) has noted that human interactions, through language, have underlying ideologies and the goal of language analysis is to expose their implications. Ideologies underlying language of primetime news in the Ghanaian context have not been adequately explored yet. When research such as this study is conducted, media practitioners (especially, subjects of the news, who control the selection of news items), scholars and students of language of the media will obtain complete knowledge on ideology in spoken news contents. Thus, this study adds to the long-standing research on language of broadcast news by scholars such as Bell (1994; 1991); Martin and White (2005); Thompson and Hunston (2006); Montgomery (2007); Bednarek (2010); Agu (2015); Davor, (2015); Merminod (2018); and Merminod and Burger (2019).

Statement of the Problem

Literature on language of the media and recent research has explored the discourse of broadcast news for both written and spoken news. One limitation of such studies (Agu, 2015; Bednarek, 2010; Bell, 1994; Davor, 2015; Martin and White, 2005; Merminod & Burger, 2019; Merminod, 2018; Montgomery, 2007; Thompson and Hunston, 2006) is that they do not provide information on ideological meanings that accompany the language described in the news. The consequence is that the explanations provided for linguistic practices in the media are not complete since they ignore the ideological environment in news texts. Our study is a step taken towards contributing to research on ideological positioning in primetime TV news presentations, which seems to have been given less attention in the description of language of the media. In view of this, we investigate the linguistic resources in the news stories that ideologically position news subjects or news presenters in primetime TV news presentations in Ghana.

Research Question

It is against this background that this study is conducted under the guidance of this research question:
What ideological positionings do news subjects take in (the course of the) TV primetime news presentations?

Aims of the Study

The study aims to investigate ideological presence in language of spoken news. It pays specific attention to the description of ideological positionings in primetime news presentations in four selected TV stations in Ghana, following the Graduation category and other relevant systems of Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory. As McQuail (2010) explains, news presenters have what it takes to transfer or disseminate their ideologies and values to the people or viewers. This study provides an alternative path to comprehensive and structured descriptions of language of ideology in primetime news presentations in Ghana.

Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the study has implication for research on ideological description of language under Graduation system. Admittedly, global scholars of ideology have explained ideology as power related, hence, the usual application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Nevertheless, it is important to theorize local spoken news language to establish public literacies and participation through news broadcast under a model like the Graduation subsystem of Appraisal theory by Martin and White (2005). According to Martin and White (2005, p. 136), "the semantics of Graduation subsystem is central to the Appraisal system". The two subcategories of Graduation system, Focus and Force, provide avenues to represent expressions as ideological by grading the semantics of the expressions as being more or less definite (Focus) or as meaning making from low to high intensity (Force) (Martin & White, 2005). Thus, under the Graduation system, the feelings, values, belief systems and opinions (which are what ideology represents) are given full expressions, whether definite or intense (Martin & White, 2005). Hence, in my quest to establish the ideological positioning of news presenters in the language of the news, the Graduation system of the Appraisal theory was found to be useful. Unlike Pan's (2015) study into ideological positions in news translation, in which she blames translators for ideological imbalance in news translations, resulting in tensions in the Chinese and other Western societies, this study raises theoretical consciousness of recognizing the ideological norms that govern spoken news. Thus, the study puts appraisal into perspective as meaning emitting in context.

The study is again useful to scholars and students who are interested in language use in the media, appraisal meaning behind linguistic constructions and studies on primetime news presentations. It is also valuable to media practitioners working with transmitting of news and information to the public, including journalists, editors, broadcasters, and news presenters. The results will, hence, be useful to scholars in media language, linguistics, and others with interests in language and news value. Thus, implications of the findings of the study will better inform scholars, students, and media practitioners to maintain high quality linguistic choices.

Theoretical Background

Martin and White developed Appraisal Theory, as a model of evaluation in Australia (Martin, 2000). The theory is useful for tracking the choices speakers/writers (in this case, subjects of the news) make or employ to encode attitudinal meanings, to adjust degrees of evaluations and to contract and expand dialogical space (Lancaster, 2011). Martin and White (2005) intimate that the expressions created in a text as a form of evaluation, bring out "the subjective presence of speakers in the text as they adopt stances towards the material they present and those with whom they communicate" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 1). The choice of words and expressions in a particular text could reflect what a speaker or writer says. Thus,

a speaker's or writer's intentions could be seen in the choice of words employed (Sobeng, 2016). Martin (2000) explains that appraisal, negotiation, and involvement together construe the register variable, tenor, which is concerned with the ongoing concession of relations of power and solidarity (intimacy or distance) among interlocutors such as news presenters and their viewers

The Appraisal Theory has three interactive subsystems – Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation. What this means is that at any instance of appraisal, a text has the capacity of conveying these three important meanings, considered as the subsystems of the Appraisal Theory, as presented in Figure 1 below:
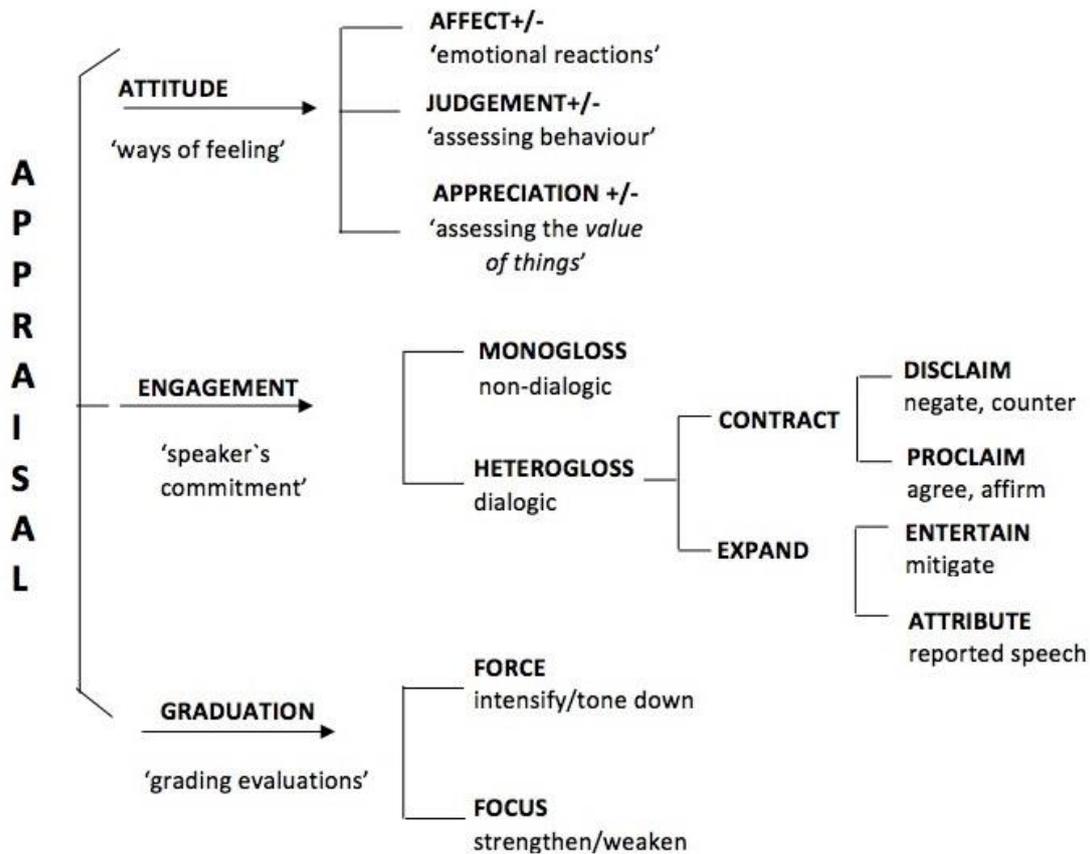

Figure 1: The Appraisal Theory (Adapted from Martin & White, 2005)

Literature Review

In linguistic anthropology, ideology, when explored, exposes how a speaker's linguistic beliefs are linked to social systems, which the speaker belongs, illustrating how such systems reinforce those beliefs. Ideology, as important as it sounds, has not received universally agreed-upon definition from scholars (Cassels, 1996, p. 1). Some scholars propose that ideology should be associated with "ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interest of a ruling group or class by distortion or dissimulation" (Eagleton, 1991, p. 30, as cited in Perez, 2003, p. 4). These scholars also think that ideology is a set of "attitudes shared by members of a particular social group" (Bloor & Bloor 2007, p. 10). It is not only ideas, beliefs, and attitudes, but also "speech and cultural practices that operate to the advantage of a particular social group" (Mesthrie, 2010, p. 320) can be categorized as ideology.

The media have widely been seen as a tool, although the liberalists believe that it is a neutral entity with free content for public consumption (Cakmak, 2018). The Marxists, however, insist that the media is

the transmitter of ideologies produced entirely under the power of the government (Cakmak, 2018, p. 817) to control the masses with their ideologies. Under this system, the Marxists propose that ideologies held by the masses are false consciousness; because, what the people hold as their worldview, serves the interest of the ruling class. In the literature, whereas some researchers regard the media as a major tool for transferring ideologies of the dominant group (Cakmak, 2018; Lu & Chu, 2016); others insist that ideology is an apparatus in the media that binds the society to sovereign power (McQuail, 2010; Yilmaz & Kirazolugu, 2014). Media, in this study, is a sophisticated platform through which news presenters convey information and their ideological positions, which is usually political in nature to viewers (Cakmak, 2018; Lu & Chu, 2016; Pan, 2015; Yilmaz & Kirazolugu, 2014). The meanings associated with ideology and media in the literature position the media as the main mode of transferring ideologies to the society. By this, the media contents, released on daily basis, ideologically influence the people.

Sam (2016) believes that the main communication tool for ideology is language embedded in utterances we mostly do not realize they are there. It is against this background that this study, drawing from the evaluative and semiotic meanings, describes the ideology in television news presentations with the intention of revealing their positioning in Ghana's TV primetime news content. A French philosopher, Antoine Destutt de Tracy, introduced the concept of ideology and initially explained it as "the science of ideas that aims to establish the source of our beliefs, perceptions, and opinions so that we could overcome some of our prejudices and illusions that cause mutual misunderstandings and conflicts between people" (Lylo, 2016, p. 13). From sociological point of view, Van Dijk (2004) suggests that ideology is the basis for representing a group, and the beliefs they form in social memory as a kind of group scheme that expresses the identity of a group. Again, Croteau, Hoynes and Milan (2012) agree with McQuail (2010) and note that ideology is an "organized belief system or set of values that is disseminated or reinforced by communication" (p. 466). In Toolan's (2002) study, it is explained that under ideology, writers and readers or speakers and hearers, are equally vehicles for the transport of ideological themes, their production and consumption of texts, the means by which those themes are kept potent in culture. Toolan's (2002) view on what ideology represents in news language suggests that subjects in the content and presentation of primetime news are ideological transport vehicles whenever news is presented. One major theme that runs through these scholars' view on ideology is that every utterance is ideologically marked, hence, the concern of linguists should be to expose these hidden ideologies for the purpose of meaning making. Clearly, unveiling ideological positioning in utterances is a viable way of making present, but concealed meaning, visible. Our discussions on ideological positioning in primetime news presentations in this study is shaped by Toolan's (2002) view of ideology in news presentation. As indicated earlier, this study investigates the specific ideologies inherent in Ghana's news, focusing on evaluative and semiotic meanings, and most importantly, their implications to news language.

Methodology
Research Design
This study is rooted in qualitative research paradigm. The design is suitable for exploring meaning and giving interpretations to social or human problems (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2009). Under qualitative research design, researchers describe and explain linguistic resources in a text. We investigate and describe linguistic resources that project ideological positioning in primetime news presentations from four selected TV stations in Ghana. This is in line with Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) thought on what qualitative researchers do: "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings,

attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). We specifically found qualitative content analysis useful, since it deals with techniques for systematic texts analysis (Mayring, 2000). Moreover, Babbie (2001) sees content analysis as "the study of recorded human communication" (p. 304). Major features of content analysis are recording, downloading, and coding, which prominently featured in our data gathering process.

The processes involved in qualitative content analysis are in three phases: preparation, organization, and reporting of results (Elo et al. 2014). The preparation phase of qualitative content analysis consists of "collecting suitable data for content analysis, making sense of the data, and selecting the unit of analysis" (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 3). The organization phase involves categorization matrix development, whereby all the data are reviewed for content and coded for correspondence to or exemplification of the identified categories (Polit & Beck, 2012). In the reporting phase, results are described by the content of the categories describing the phenomenon using a selected approach (Elo et al., 2014). Thus, the specific processes involved in qualitative content analysis include the thinking stage (preparation phase), the documentation stage (organization phase) and the telling stage (reporting phase). These processes were rigidly followed in this study.

Data Description

The data for this study are primetime news presentations from four TV stations in Ghana; Ghana Television (GTV), TV3 Ghana Limited (TV3), JOY NEWS (Joy News) and Citi Newsroom (Citi TV). These TV stations are among the ten most influential TV stations in Ghana as at 2019 (GeoPoll research services, 2019). The stations broadcast their national primetime news bulletins each night. The data was downloaded from *Facebook* and *YouTube* platforms of the selected stations using *SaveFrom.net*. I then coded the news to make it standard for further and focused investigations. Babbie (1992) explains coding as "the process of transforming raw data into a standardized form" (p. 309). The downloaded data was then transcribed using the Jefferson transcription model.

The volume of data for this study is in line with the concept of saturation point. Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012), when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained (Guest et al., 2006), and when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest et al., 2006). Bearing this in mind, we studied the data intensely to saturation point where at a point, we kept getting the same information we had already attained. It was at this saturated point that we focused on interpreting the observations and findings in the news.

Analysis and Discussions
Ideological Positioning in Evaluative Resources

There were expressions in the news that projected the ideologies of subjects of primetime news presentations. Ideological implications of evaluative resources in the primetime news presentations are explored. The following are primetime news bulletin extracts that demonstrate this observation (the highlighted resources are evaluative meaning making resources that ideologically position subjects of news). In the instances below, NH represents News Headlines, BN stands for Business News and MN represents Main News:

Extract 1

Parliament **approves** Justice Kwesi Anim Yeboah as Chief Justice Holiday makers **throng** bus terminals ↑ (*NH*) And presidential candidate Yuom Soro **seeks refuge** in Ghana as Cote D'evior issues warrant for his arrest (*NH*) (GTV, 24th December, 2019)

Extract 2

↑National Labour Commission (NLC) to **suspend** salaries of worker groups flouting Labour Act (0.5) (News Headline, 13th April, 2018) **Right**↑ so talking about inflation **definitely** the cedi comes to play and the cedi has remained stable against its major trading currencies for today (TV3, 12th February, 2020)

Extract 3

The world is changing ↑very fast and physical contact is becoming a thing of the past **particularly** due to the COVID-19 pandemic (.) Now joining me in the studio for more on this is Hans Siaw (.) He is head of digital banking support from UBA (*BN*)

↑Hello everyone my name is Sandra Esinam Akpenu welcome to business (.) Inflation rate for the month of June has declined **marginally** (.) hh it stands at 11.2% **slightly** down from 11.3% recorded in May this year (*BN*) (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

Extract 4

In order of hierarchy (.) president Akufo Addo is the **highest** man of the land followed by the vice president and then the speaker of parliament (.) Now when he is not around then we have the Chief Justice (0.1) the 4th highest official on the land… (Citi TV, 2019) Well (.) it's exactly 30 days to the 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections and Ghanaians are **highly** expectant (MN, 30th November, 2020)

The instances provided here illustrate the use of unconstrained registers that enact authorial endorsement from the evaluative resources. In these illustrations, we notice the significant use of registers such as **approves**, **throng, particularly**, **marginally**, and **highly**, indicates news subjects' attachment to the reported news content by declaring it as true and credible, as suggested by Martin and White (2005). This situation in evaluative meanings, enacts the ideological positioning of endorsing, labelled under appraisal theory as authorial endorsing, a sub-type of attribution within the 'engagement' system by which the speaker/writer is aligned vis-à-vis other voices, other value positions and the putative addressee (Martin & White, 2005; White, 2006).

Interestingly, each broadcasting network was observed to have a particular segment where evaluative resources that suggest ideological positioning of authorial endorsement are often used. In GTV for instance, authorial endorsement such as **approves**, **throng** and **seeks refuge**, mainly occurred in their NH. It is different with Joy News, TV3 and Citi TV. In Joy News, all authorial endorsing resources such as **particularly**, **marginally,** and **slightly** occurred in the BN segment. In Citi TV, subjects of the news preferred their authorial endorsing ideological positioning such as **highly** and **highest** during the MN bulletins. For TV3, their ideologically positioned authorial endorsing resources such as **definitely**, **suspend**, and **right** were found both in the NH – **suspend**, and BN – **definitely**, and **right**.

Authorial distancing is another ideological positioning that was observed in the news data besides the authorial endorsement. Ideological positioning of authorial distancing, employed in the data, and was

enacted through evaluative resources, indicate a withholding of support for the proposition in the news bulletin. In the primetime news texts, evaluative resources that projected authorial distancing ideological positioning were observed from all the four TV broadcasting networks. The following are few instances where evaluative resources used positioned subjects of the news as ideologically distancing:

Extract 5

The **alleged** witches' camp at Nabuli in the Northern Region has been closed down (0.1) and the 45 inmates reintegrated into society (.) The women run from various communities in Northern Ghana to seek refuge in the camp after being accused of being witches and subjected to life threatening abuse (.) (GTV, 24th December, 2019)

Extract 6

↑Absolutely and to our first story tonight (.) hh a banking consultant Dr. Richmond Atuahene **has cautioned** the bank of Ghana not to force banks into mergers simply because they cannot raise the new minimum capital requirement of 400million cedis by (.) December 31 (.) He noted there are different risk complexities (.) systems and processes of each bank that could present stumbling blocks (.) after the merger is effected… (TV3, 13th April, 2018) Minority in parliament **threaten to boycott** president's state of the nation address next week (.) if government fails to settle MP's common fund (TV3, 12th February, 2020)

Extract 7

↑**Grim and deadly that's the description given by four teacher unions** for the continuous stay of students on campuses at the various schools (.) The pre-tertiary unions GNAT (,) NAGRAT (,) TEWU and Coalition of concerned teachers Ghana are asking government to close down schools in the wake of the spread of COVID-19 cases in Senior High Schools (.) The national council of PTA and Catholic Bishop Conference **have called for suspension** of WASSCE and BECE following the spike in COVID-19 cases in SHS (.) In a statement issued it read the situation is **really grim and deadly** (.) (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

Extract 8

…the court presided over by a supervising high court judge Justice Eric Baah **held** that since the offense of treason felony is one that a person can be imprisoned for life the accused persons will be denied bail (.) They have therefore been taken into lawful custody once more to reappear on December 18 2019 hhh They are being held for carrying out an exercise to declare parts of Ghana independent how be it without legal basis… (Citi TV, 2019)

Now **according to** projections (,) the incumbent eh well he beat the incumbent Donald Trump who has now become the 1st sitting president in the US to lose an election since 1992 (.) hh Now various world leaders have been congratulating Joe Biden (.) There is more in the following report (Citi TV, 30th November, 2020)

In language of evaluation, resources are employed to indicate a particular stance by the writer or speaker. Hyland and Tse (2004) have shown that authors dwell on a range of linguistic devices to engage readers and signal specific attitude to their readers. In Hyland and Tse's (2004) view, a major resource for stance or position taking in academic writing is self-mention, which is absent in the selected data for this study.

Subjects of the news and for that matter, news presenters, do not employ self-mention linguistic resources such as **me** when presenting the news, except for the introductory stage. It is when news presenters are mentioning their names to viewers that they use the self-mention **my** as a precedence to their names. They do this not to pose as sources or in this case, viewers' reliable source of news as suggested by Hyland (2003), but to initiate an interpersonal relationship with viewers for the news reports. It has been observed in this research that the tools news presenters use to ideologically position themselves and take a stance are mainly evaluative resources.

White (2003) has demonstrated that evaluative resources serve as tools by which textual voice engage and challenge utterances. The engagement system of the appraisal theory, by which evaluative resources are identified in a text has also been recognized as one effective strategy adopted for construing authorial stance (Brook, 2014), whether for the purpose of endorsement or distancing. In the data for this research, evaluative resources, such as we have in the instances provided above, illustrate authorial distancing, where subjects of primetime news get to indicate directly or indirectly a restrain of support for the proposition in the content of that news bulletin. As presented in Extracts 5 to 8, such resources include **alleged**, **has cautioned**, **threatened to boycott**, **grim and deadly** and **according to**. These evaluative resources enact what Martin and White (2005) and White (2016) call authorial distancing. The ideological implication is that news subjects, by using **allege**, for instance, actively distance themselves from the attributed material in the primetime news, presenting subjects of news as withholding support for that proposition, while the case is slightly different with **according to**. In the case of the use of **according to,** and other related resources such as **say** or **said**, they suggest neutrality because they portray the speaker neither as supportive of nor unsupportive of the proposition. In other words, the use of evaluative resources like **alleges**, **claimed**, **threatened**, **grim and deadly** (categorized under Appraisal theory as attribute for acknowledging the source of news stories), ideologically positions subjects of primetime news as directly unsupportive and absolutely distanced from the facts in the news bulletins being presented, whereas the use of neutral resources such as **according to**, **said** or **say** ideologically positions subjects of primetime news as neither unsupportive nor supportive of that particular proposition in the news (neutral). However, both evaluative meaning categories (whether as directly and actively distancing or neutral) illustrate the ideological positioning of authorial distancing for news subjects of primetime news presentations.

Ideological Positioning in Primetime News Semiotics

This section explores ideological relevance of semiotics in the data. It will specifically discuss how semiotics in primetime news presentations in Ghana enact ideological positioning for subjects of the news. The session pays attention to News Headlines (NH) semiotics because NH segment happens to be the one that has all the various components of semiotics (sound, visuals, and language) fully used for the effect of securing viewers' attention.

It has been observed in this study that sounds and visuals accompany the reading of especially NH. Semiotics is well utilized in the entire primetime news for effective presentation of the meanings associated with each news story line. The collective use of sounds, visuals and language in NH has the pulling or attention-grabbing capacity on viewers, which has ideological implications for subjects of news as serious-minded, creative, attention grabbers and those who would want to present only the best to their viewers. This observation is illustrated in the following extracts of NH semiotics from the four TV broadcasting networks for some selected news nights. Each station's set of headlines will be accompanied by the news texts that were read while visuals were displayed, and sound played on the screens:

Extract (GTV)

President Akuffo Addo **ends** Western regional tour expressing confidence in the Ghanaian workforce (NH, PR1)

National Social Protection Policy taken through final validation (NH, PR1)

Effective implementation of mother tongue language policy discussed (NH, PR2)

And in Guinea (,) EU observers pick on validity of polls (NH, PR1)

The semiotics presented in the NH above from GTV have a way of attracting the attention of viewers and giving viewers a feel of what is in store for them as far as that news night was concerned. In the NH above, we see that in the news, there was going to be report that would capture President Akufo Addo's tour to the Western region and why he expressed confidence in the Ghanaian workforce. A viewer can sit and wait for the details of this news. Again, viewers are made to know that there will be an aspect of the news that will dwell on our mother tongue policy in our educational system. This news line can make any curious viewer wait and find out how policy makers intend to do that, knowing how many times attempts to do this have literally failed. These and the other NH have the capacity to grab viewers' attention right from the beginning of the one-hour news broadcast till the end of the news presentation. Similar observations were made in NH from TV3, Joy News and Citi TV as illustrated below:

Extract 10 (TV3, 12th February, 2020)

Ahead in the news (increased volume in the sound being played for headline news for 20 seconds) Health workers at Ga East hospital complain of lack of incentives as they are mandated with more COVID-19 cases (sound is played while the rest of the visuals are displayed for 5 seconds) (NH, PR2)

We will also tell you how the Christian counsel of Ghana is directing all church heads to ensure the strict enforcement of COVID-19 protocols (.) failing which there could be some repercussions (sound is played while the rest of the visuals for this headline story displayed) (NH, PR1)

As Ghana climaxes chocolate week (,) we tell you the story of 95-year-old cocoa farmer who has ↑NEVER tasted chocolate before (0.4) (NH, PR2)

And on the international front tonight (,) UK's Supreme Court rules oil polluted Nigerian communities can sue shell petroleum in English Courts (0.10) (TV3, NH, PR2)

The NH presented here, ideologically positions TV3's news subjects as focused on COVID-19, production of cocoa and Nigeria's oil related issues. Amidst several events that took place in the country that day, TV3's News 360 chose to concentrate their NH on COVID-19 (representing the health sector), cocoa production, which represents the sector of our economy that generates income for the country and Nigeria's major income generating natural resource – oil. This shows that when the chance was given, subjects of TV3's news 360 settled on the health and economy of both Ghana and Nigeria, revealing their values and belief positions (MacQuail, 2010) concerning health and economic situation communicated through their selection of news items for the primetime news. This agrees with Toolan (2002) view that ideological positioning in news is inherent values and beliefs hidden in speakers' utterances and can only be revealed through language.

Extract 11 (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

↑Tonight (,) on Joy News Prime (.) Exchange of ↑hefty blows at Krowor Constituency of voter registration over allegations of busing non-residents to register (Joy News, NH, PR1)

And also (,) in this bulletin (.) Communications minister Ursula Owusu Akufo **rejects** claims by the minority in parliament to close down three of its terrestrial channels (NH, PR1)

And in business (,) Ghana's stock exchange drop by six million cedis in 2009 (NH, PR2)

On this night's primetime news, one can easily deduce based on the NH from Joy News that their focus was on politically related issues in Ghana, the Ghana stock exchange and issues surrounding the voter's registration. In the NH, we notice a report on voter registration blues and its associated controversies. The details of this NH took almost 10 minutes to report, instead of the almost 5minutes allocated to each news story. Additionally, there was a story on the communications minister, Ursula Owusu Akufo, who is reported to have rejected the claim by the minority in parliament to close a section of Ghana Broadcasting Corporation's (GBC) terrestrial channel. This NH was equally given close to 10 minutes for the presentation of its details. Ursula Owusu's speech was fully captured to show how important this NH was. It is a known fact that one gives more time to what he/she values. The final NH focused on Ghana's stock exchange, which represents the business or economic sector of the country and the decline it is

experiencing. These NH show that subjects of the news from Joy News value political issues, represented by the NH on Ursula Owusu's comment on the minority's claim as well as the minority in parliament's reaction to her comment. Another politically related NH from Joy News is the report on electoral registration controversies during the period of election. They finally presented NH on the economic sector, represented in the NH as the decline in Ghana's stock exchange by six million cedis as of 2019. The choice of NH presented on in this particular news night, enact what subjects of Joy News believe in and value. Earlier in this thesis, it has been stated that ideological positioning in news has to do with the set of beliefs and values of subjects of news, especially, news presenters enacted through news stories that reveal news presenters' stance or position in the news as noticed in the selected data for this study, in line with the views of scholars like McQuail (2010) and Van Dijk (2006). The following NH are from Citi TV:
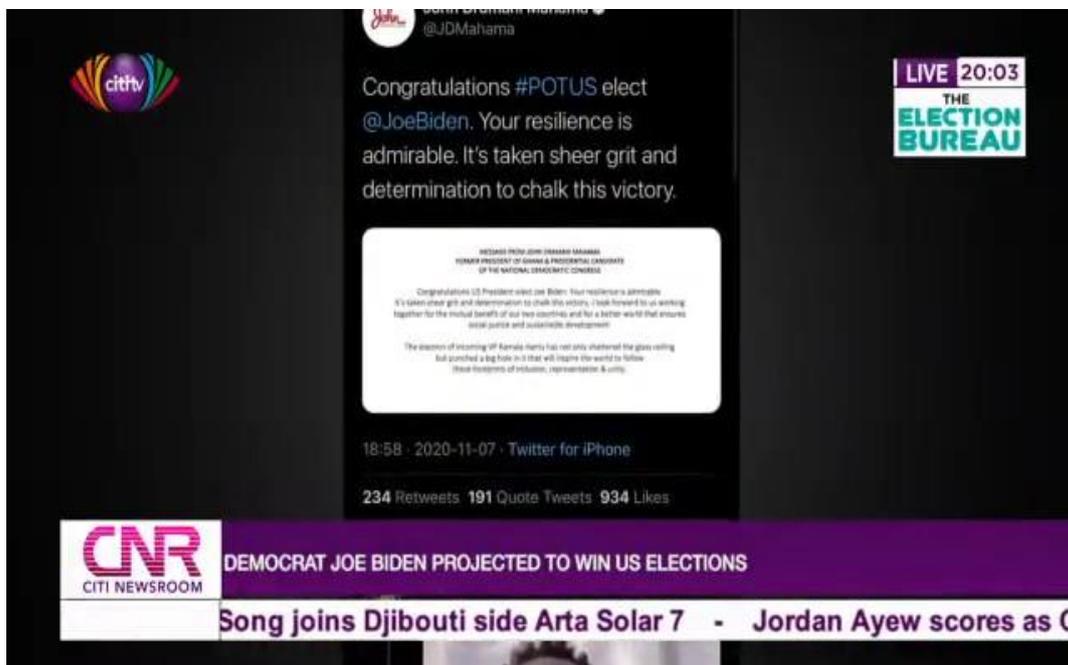
Extract 12 (Citi TV, 7th November, 2020)

…Speaker of parliament declares the Fomena seat vacant following the decision of the incumbent MP to go independent (sound played and visuals displayed for four seconds) (NH, PR1)

↑And later (,) our reader will be on the Ashanti and Eastern Regions as we join the NPP and NDC residential candidates campaigning to win the hearts of Ghanaians (sound and short speeches from both presidential candidates for 28 seconds) (NH, PR2)

Also in this package (,) company contracted by government to implement Accra intelligent traffic management project hhh Beijing Everyway Traffic and Lightning Technology ↑**threatens** to drag Ghana to the London court of international arbitration following the abrogation of its contract (NH, PR1)

And later on (,) Joe Biden is projected to win the US electionsxlt (NH, PR2)

In Citi TV's semiotics for the NH sessions, one gets the impression that news subjects' focus and for that matter value and beliefs (McQuail, 2010) will be on issues around elections, both in Ghana and US, as well as a threat issued by a Chinese company to Ghana due to Ghana's decision to withdraw from a contract agreement it earlier had with them. The semiotics used in the NH shows the exact themes that subjects of news seek to present on and thereby revealing to viewers what news subjects value and their area of interest as either health, business, political, economic, or social noting that NH are usually hard

news that need urgent attention. The ideological positions of the four TV stations are summarized and presented in Table 1. This table was presented earlier in Chapter Three as part of the data description, however, for the purpose this discussion, I present the table again here as Table 1. The data for Table 1 as used in this study, were downloaded, and transcribed from the 2019 and 2020 archives of the four TV stations, since they were quite current and available:

Table 1: What News Items (NI) presented by the TV stations focus on

TV Stations	GTV	TV3	JOY NEWS	CITI TV
Year	2019	2019	2019	2019
Focus of News Items	NI, 1: Politics NI,2: Social issue on closure of a witch camp NI,3: Chieftaincy NI, 4: News on religious activity NI,5: Education NI,6: Law NI,7: Business NI,8: Business NI,9: Business NI, 10: Health	NI,1: Social issue NI,2: Politics NI,3: Politics NI,4: Education NI,5: Education NI, 6: Health	NI, 1: Politics NI,2: Law NI, 3: Politics NI,4: Media NI,5: Elections NI,6: Parliament NI, 7: Business NI,8: Parliament NI,9: Elections NI,10: Sanitation	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Politics NI,3: Industrial strikes-GRIDCO NI,4: -Teacher unions' strike NI,5: Law NI,6: Elections NI,7: Politics NI,8: Politics NI,9: Law
Source	Facebook	YouTube	YouTube	Facebook
Year	2020	2020	2020	2020
News focus	NI,1: Education NI,2: Education NI,3: Sanitation NI,4: Politics NI,5: Education NI,6: Education NI,7: Humanitarian NI,8: Health NI,9: Business NI,10: Health	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Politics NI,3: Law NI,4: Law NI,5: Education NI,6: Health NI,7: Business NI,8: Business NI,9: Business	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Politics NI,3: Education NI,4: Business NI,5: Business NI,6: Entertainment NI,7: Health NI,8: Health NI,9: Health	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Business NI,3: Politics NI,4: Law NI,5: Elections NI,6: Elections NI,7: Politics NI,8: Politics NI,9: Politics

		NI,10: Business	NI,10: Politics	NI,10: Politics NI,11: social issue
Source	Facebook	YouTube	YouTube	YouTube

Table 1 above gives us an impression of what the news items from the TV stations focus on. A quick look at the focus of news items, affirms the view that news items are selected and presented as values and beliefs that are disseminated and reinforced by news presentations (McQuail, 2010; Bloor & Bloor, 2007; Toolan, 2002). Subjects of the news disseminate their beliefs by selecting and presenting news contents on issues they belief, conform to what they stand for, hence, as observed in the data, each TV station's focus in each year's selected news presentation, is quite different, ranging from health issues, educational issues, business, and political news contents. As suggested by Mesthrie (2010), the selection and presentation processes are ideological practices that operate to the advantage of a particular social group, representing the ideological positioning of these social groups or in this case, the ideological positioning the TV stations. Table 1 shows that in 2019, GTV's NI focused more on business but paid attention to education in 2020. For TV3, their NI focused on politics and education in 2019, but paid more attention to business in 2020. Joy News paid attention to politics, election, and parliamentary issues in 2019, and focused more on politics and health issues in 2020. This observation gives us a fair idea of the ideological positioning of the news subjects of the TV stations when it comes to news content, which according to Van Dijk (2004), represents the beliefs of the group (in this case, the subjects of the TV station) by expressing the identity of that group in social memory. This is what Bloor and Bloor (2007) explain as beliefs and attitudes shared by members of a particular social group projecting the group's ideological position. Figures 2 and 3 below are the graphical representations of the information presented on Table 1 above:

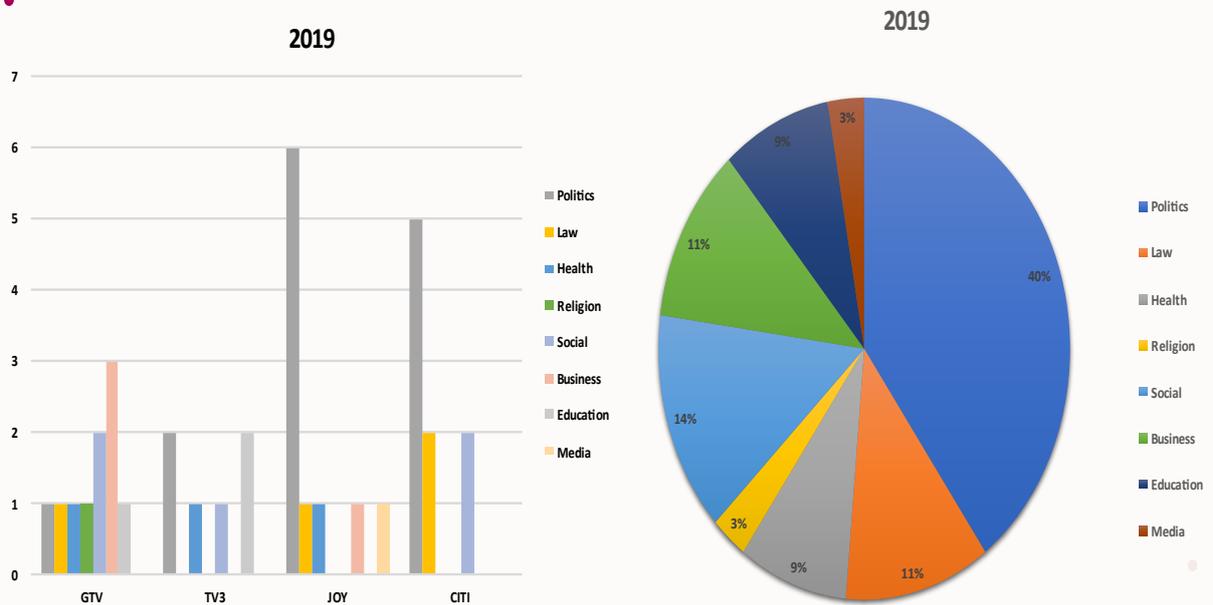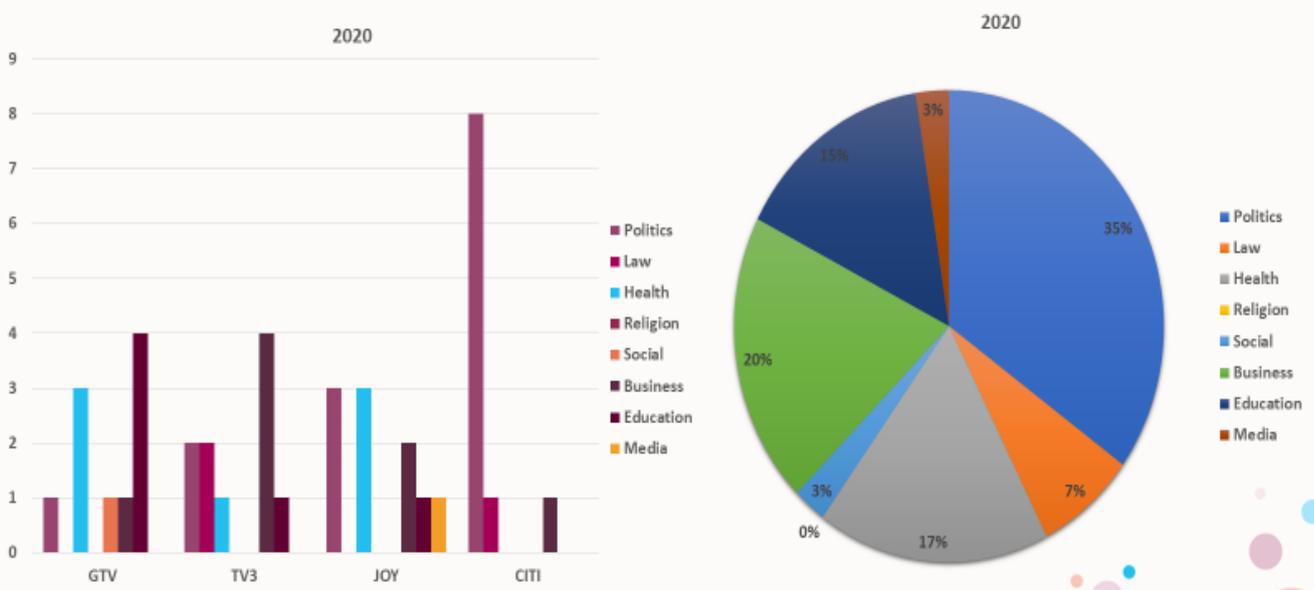Figure 2: Graphical Representation of Ideological Positioning In Primetime News Presentations

Figure 3: Graphical Representation of Ideological Positioning In Primetime News Presentations (Year 2020)

Figures 2 and 3 are graphical representations of the linguistic resources in the data that enacted ideological positioning for news presenters or subjects of the news. Both the bar and pie charts in Figures 2 and 3 give us a reflection of the ideological impacts that language of primetime TV news presentations have on viewers.

Admittedly, attractive sights amidst interesting, customized sounds for each NH from the selected TV stations and accompanying language during primetime news, have a way of grabbing viewers' attention for the one-hour primetime news session. Once viewers' attention is grabbed, news subjects assume that the audience of their viewers is secured. Keane (2003) has mentioned that ideology in semiotics functions within a representational economy, where the totality of technologies, media, institutions, and practices prevalent in any given social context, have effect on one another. In line with the observation made by scholars such as McQuail, (2010), Mesthrie (2010), Bloor & Bloor (2007), Toolan, (2002) and Keane (2003), semiotics in NH in the selected data for this study interacts to have both tacit and intended effects and enact political, economic, health and social ideological positioning apart from authorial endorsement and distancing positioning for news subjects, especially, news presenters. The next session explores ideological positioning in primetime news through other linguistic features.

Ideological Positioning Through Other Linguistic Features in Primetime News

Due to the length of time used to deliver primetime news, several linguistic features are employed to make the session lively, creative, yet informative. Linguistic features such as pronouns, tenses, alliterations, metaphors, interpersonal expressions are among the many linguistic features that are employed. Frequently used linguistic features in primetime news are pronouns, which have interpersonal effect on presenter – viewer relationship. Consequently, this session will focus on pronouns used in the news texts as part of the interactional roles enacted in the data by some linguistic expressions, since these linguistic features ideologically position subjects of the news as agents of inclusivity (Uzum, 2017) in their presentation of the primetime news. Hence, this session will pay attention to ideological positioning in primetime news through linguistic features that enact interactional roles in the data.

Interactional Roles Enacted in Primetime News

Another significantly employed linguistic feature in the primetime news text is interpersonal expressions. Interpersonal, as mentioned earlier, represents the use of language to establish relationship between speaker and listener, in this case, between subjects of the news or news presenters and viewers. As Mwinlaaru (2016) notes, the interpersonal meaning encodes interactional roles, identities, relationships, attitude and stance in discourse. To enact interpersonal relationship with viewers, news presenters employ interpersonal expressions: **welcome**..., **please do stay**..., **let's talk about** …, **let's move to**… **Hello everyone**…. In this way, presenters assure viewers that their presence is cherished, not ignored. Such expressions position news presenters as the ones in authority and have capacity of leading and asking viewers to join them as they shift from one segment of the news to another. The primetime news extracts below demonstrate interpersonal techniques, adopted by news presenters to construct interactional roles and relationships with viewers:

Extract 13

Good evening (,) it is the eve of Christmas my name is Winifred Afum (,) ↑**welcome to news hour** (MN, PR2) **Hello good evening and welcome**…There is more news after this break (0.1**) please do stay↓** (BS)

Hello good evening (,) **let's talk sports** (SS) GTV (24th December, 2019)

Thanks for joining us on news 360

Let's move on to our first story this evening

Let's move from parliament and go straight to the court (MN)

Let's do MTN video report now

Thanks for staying with us on news 360 (.) Let's do business with me…   (MN)

Well↑ it remains stable or recorded some gains against the dollar and the Euro but depreciated slightly against the pounds by 0.15% there **let's see what am talking about as the figures play out by itself** (BN) TV3 (12th February, 2020)

Alright before we go on that break (.) **let's get straight to the Ashanti   region** and speak with Erastus Asare Donkoh who filed that report and also has been monitoring (.) (MN)

↑**Hello everyone** my name is Sandra Esinam Akpenu **welcome to business** (BN)…(.) **Grateful for your time** (.) I have more business news updates after 8pm (.) **Thanks for watching** (BN)

Let's do more on COVID-19 because Ghana has recorded the total 264 new COVID-19 cases (.)… **Join the hashtag save the health worker now↓** (.) And eh **don't forget** this is being championed by Joy News (.) and the multimedia group (.) (MN)

Log on to myjoyonline.com for more business updates (.) **Stay home** (,) **safe and stay beautiful** (.) (BN) (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

Hello and welcome to the Citi newsroom my name is Bobie Osei (MN)

Well so **let's go back to our story** on the nomination of Justice Anim Yeboah as the new Chief Justice (Citi TV, 2019)

This is the election bureau (.) **welcome** to the Citi newsroom on Citi TV (.)

You are **welcome back** to the Citi newsroom (.) **Let's move to more stories** now…**Let's get more** from our central regional correspondent Calves Tetteh (()) (MN)

…**it's been a pleasure coming your ↑way** (.) (Citi TV, 30th November, 2020)

We notice in these extracts that expressions such as **let's move to more stories**..., **let's get more**…, **let's go back to our story**…., **let's talk sports**…., among others, enact what Mwinlaaru (2016) calls interactional roles and relationships in the news discourse. In these expressions, news presenters are positioned as friendly and engaging as seen in the expression, **let's** literally saying that viewers should come along as they move to the next segment.

There were other interpersonal expressions used in the data that welcomed viewers to various segments of the primetime news: **welcome back**…, **welcome to news hour**…, **Hello and welcome**…, **Hello good evening and welcome**. These welcoming expressions, in Martin and White's (2005) view, connote satisfaction and make viewers feel warmly welcomed to the various segments of the news. Other satisfying resources that enacted interactional roles in the data include **Hello everyone**..., **Grateful for your time**..., **don't forget** this is being championed by Joy News (.), **Stay home** (,) **stay safe and stay beautiful**…, **it's been a pleasure coming your ↑way**.

The use of Pronouns in Primetime News

Another interpersonal resource used in the data, which shows interaction is pronoun. Interpreting pronouns, according to Pennycook (1994) is a challenging task, since they are complex and political words that always raise difficult issues of who is not being represented. Despite its ambiguous and problematic nature, Uzum (2017) insists that analyzing and interpreting pronouns is dependent on the information

provided in the context. In the data for this study, personal pronouns "we", "us", "our", "you", "your", "my" and "I" are intermittently used during news presentations to refer to subjects of the news, especially the news presenters and viewers. The referent of the use of "we", "us" and "our" is subjects of the news or the news presenters in this study. The role these personal pronouns play is that they ideologically position subjects of the news or the news presenters as actors, who consciously or otherwise, lure and lead viewers on as the news items are presented. This observation corroborates the findings of Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013) that such personal pronouns are frequently the 'Actor' in goal-directed clauses. Instances of the use of the personal pronoun "we" as the Actor in goal-directed clauses include:

'We now go' (GTV)
'We are going' (TV3)
'We will bring you' (Citi TV)
'We are going straight' (Joy News)

This use of "we", which refers only to the speaker and excludes the viewer is what Uzum (2017) calls exclusive "we". As suggested by Uzum (2017), the interpretation of pronouns is dependent on the context, in that, in some of the instances of the use of "we", it is referring to both the speaker and the viewer, known as the inclusive "we" (Uzum, 2017; Pennycook, 1994). Instances of the use of inclusive "we" include "we are going straight…" (Joy New); "we now go…" (GTV). In the use of both inclusive and exclusive "we", the news presenters are ideologically positioned as actors (Mwinlaaru, 2016), who call the short and determine what viewers should hear about. This pattern of pronoun usage positions news subjects (especially the news presenters) as in charge of news items that viewers consume each news night. Further, whenever the pronoun "we" is used, related pronouns, "us", "our" "you" and "yours" are often in its company. The following primetime news extracts illustrate the collective use of personal pronouns "we", "us", "our", "you" and "your":

Extract 14
Well↑ **we** are live on TV3 Ghana on Facebook (,) DSTV channel 279 all across the world on 3news.com (.) Share **your** thoughts with **us** as **we** go on (0.4) TV3 (12th February, 2020)

Joy News
…ehh **we** will be joined shortly by ehh **our** correspondent in Kumasi (.) and for more after this break (.) Alright before **we** go on that break (,) (15th July, 2020)

Citi TV
And on that note (,) **we** end the Citi News (.) **We** have more stories on Citi newsroom.com (.) **You** can download Citi newsroom app from the google play store (.) **You** can also watch Citi TV on DSTV channel 363 and Go TV channel 182 (30th November, 2020)

GTV
We now go to Dagbon (0.1) It was a process that lasted for 17 years and as in the case with many disputes (0.1) The Dagbon chieftaincy conflicts brought in its wake negative repercussions (PR2)

You are watching the business segment of the news hour live on GBC news and governor's channel (BS PR) (24th December, 2019)

In the extracts above, subjects of the news (through the presenters), enact their total control of events during the primetime news sessions, except for GTV where the personal pronouns "we" and "you" are the only pronouns used on few occasions. TV3, Joy News and Citi TV's primetime news texts are, however, filled with personal pronouns "we", "us", "you" and "your" as seen in the instances presented in Example 6.4.2. "We" and "us" are used to refer to subjects of the news while the use of "you" and "your" refer to viewers. This shows that news subjects involve their viewers in the news being presented, giving viewers opportunity to feel that they are part of the primetime news. This is usually seen when subjects of the news invite viewers to share their views and watch more news on their digital channels:

You can watch **us** on DSTV channel…,
 you can download…,
share **your** thought with **us** on as **we** go on…
You can download Citi newsroom app from the google play store…

It is interesting to note that news presenters get very personal as they present news when they use personal pronouns "I" and "my". Pronouns "I" and "my", used in primetime news presentations by news presenters are introductory techniques that news presenters use to introduce themselves to their viewers. The extracts below demonstrate the use of personal pronouns "I" and "my" as introductory techniques by news presenters:

GTV
My name is Emmanuel Amegashie (PR1)
Good evening it is the eve of Christmas (,) **my** name is Winifred Afum   (24th December, 2019)

TV3
Thanks for joining us on news 360 (,) we are live at our news hub here at Adesawe (,) Kanda in Accra **my** name is Aisha Yakubu
And **I** am Alfred Ocansey coming up tonight… (12th February, 2020)

Joy News
That's how we wrap up for business tonight (.) **I** am Sandra Esinam Akpeno (.) Log on to myJoyonline.com for more business updates (.) Thank you for staying with us for sports **I** am Garry Aspect
                (15th July, 2020)

Citi TV
My name is Pearl Akanyo Ofori
And **I** am Bobie Osei (.) hh it's been a pleasure coming your way (30th November, 2020)

Hyland (2005) has demonstrated in his interpersonal model of metadiscourse that when such personal pronouns are employed in a text, they are known as self-mentions. In Hyland's (2005) estimation, self-mentions such as "I", "me", "my", "we" and "our" are linguistic tools for explicit reference to the author or in the case of this study, news presenters as observed in the selected data for this thesis. Pronouns,

ideologically position news presenters as agents, having the capacity to lead discursive inclusivity in news presentation.

Conclusion

In this study, we examined ideological positionings such as authorial endorsement and distancing, interpersonal relation through some interactional resources in primetime news presentations, which are inherent in spoken news language. As indicated by Arackal (2015), and McQuail (2010), such resources are only revealed through linguistic analysis to establish the ideologies in them. Our discussions in this study have paid attention to ideological implications of significant linguistic features in the news texts. It first explained ideological positioning in evaluative resources, moved to ideological implications of semiotic mediations in primetime news, and rounded up with linguistic features in the news texts that enact ideological positioning for subjects of the news, and viewers.

Findings of the Study

In the study, it was observed that subjects of primetime news significantly resort to attributes and graduation resources as compared to attitude resources under the appraisal theory. This suggests that subjects of news, consciously or unconsciously prefer to either endorse news contents or disassociate themselves from sensitive news contents.

Primetime news is a discourse with its unique linguistic features. As major news presentation platforms, TV broadcasting networks in Ghana, in connection with their news subjects, have seized the opportunity to present daily news stories on what Asensio (2016) calls social issues, and by so doing, unravel ideological positionings such as authorial endorsement, authorial distancing and interpersonality, enacted mainly through some evaluative resources and other linguistic features. The underlying assumptions for this study have been appraisal theory, which according to Read, Hope and Carroll (2007) describes language employed in communicating evaluation, explaining how users of English language convey attitude, dwelling on evaluative resources and how authors or speakers modify the strength of their attitude or engagement towards and with their viewers. While viewers, who are the consumers, seem to have no choice than to accept, take in and swallow whatever they are served during news presentations, news presenters call the shot. The social power between news subjects and their viewers corroborates Van Dijk's (2008) proposition of what CDA represents, except for the fact that power displayed in primetime news presentation is neither political nor an abuse of power as suggested by Van Dijk (2008).

It has also been established in this article that evaluative resources and semiotics in primetime news enact significant ideological positionings for subjects of news, their TV broadcasting networks and, in some cases, viewers. Other linguistic features in the news texts for this study were noticed to enact relevant ideologies for subjects of the news, especially, news presenters. Worth noting is the fact that there are ideological implications for linguistic resources under appraisal theory, which could be explored by linguists.

Implications for Practice

All over the world, and especially in Ghana, language of the news has been studied and described to reveal hidden meanings. However, one challenge with primetime news language is the absence of a comprehensive description of ideological meanings enacted by the linguistic resources in the news. We handle this challenge by providing an evidence-based constructive description of linguistic resources that

enact ideological positioning in primetime news presentations from four most influential TV stations in Ghana.

First, our results show that linguistic resources in primetime TV news presentations unravel ideological positionings such as authorial endorsement, authorial distancing and interpersonality, mainly through evaluative and semiotic resources. Second, our findings show that other linguistic features in the news texts, such as pronouns, welcoming, and greeting linguistic resources, enact relevant ideologies for subjects of the news. Worth noting is the fact that there are ideological implications for linguistic resources under Appraisal theory, which could be explored by linguists. Our study contributes to Appraisal theory while, describing primetime news language at the same time in its own ways. Thus, the study bridges the gap between theory and description of language of the news. Following the Appraisal systems, there has been extensions by Bednarek (2008), Hood (2010) and White (2016) on evaluative parameters. All theories provide descriptive frameworks that give linguistic account of news language (for details, see Bednarek, 2010; Martin & White, 2005, and White, 2016). Our study places the description of news language within the Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005) and shows how theory and description can enforce and enrich each other.

Finally, the study contributes to African media linguistics and primetime news. Most studies on African media language have been on written news (newspaper) and language used on radio (Agu, 2015; Nyarko, 2006; Sikanku, 2011; Kpelle, 2013; Benamara, Inkpen & Taboada, 2018). By taking qualitative content and text-based approach, the study provides an account that shows how language is used in news presentations to portray ideologies of subjects of the news in the news stories. It shows that language in major TV news presentations performs various functions for interaction, for distancing, for mediating semiotics in news, which ideologically position news subjects in the news language. The findings of the study will be useful to scholars and students of language of the media.

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