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Ideological polarity of Ethiopian people’s revolutionary democratic front coalition parties: A critical discourse analysis on the parties’ mottoes of the 2018 annual congresses

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Abstract: The goal of this research is to critically analyze and uncover the ideologies contained in the 2018 mottoes of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front coalition parties (EPRDF). The texts of the mottoes developed and used by the EPRDF coalition parties were the type of data used in this study. A critical examination of the data revealed that presupposition was used as the primary discursive strategy in the presentation of the mottoes, and the status quo versus the reformist ideologies were discovered to be the two polarized ideologies that can also be referred to as competing discourses. Some parties portrayed themselves as pro-reformists in their mottoes, while others portrayed themselves as anti-reformists. Thus, the study’s findings show that, while coalition parties are expected to plan and work toward a common goal, EPRDF coalition parties have been found with polarized ideologies that are realized as pro reformists versus pro status quo, as portrayed in the parties’ 2018 annual congress mottoes.

Subjects: Language & Linguistics; Applied Linguistics; Discourse Analysis

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; motto; ideology; reform; status quo

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The paper emphasizes the critical analysis of the ideologies contained in the 2018 slogans of the coalition parties of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front. Because the year 2018 was a time of political confusion in Ethiopia, a critical understanding of political language use at the time was critical. It was the era of political reform, which was followed by political turmoil in the country, and it was not uncommon to hear about political conspiracies via social and some mainstream media. A political situation like this, combined with fake news and hate speech spread on social media, has thrown the country into political turmoil. Everyone in the country urgently needs to understand the ideological positions of the political parties and their positions in relation to one another. This study investigates the role of language/discourses and how they are used in the context of political ideology in Ethiopian politics.
1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Although the language is a component of all social practices, it has a close relationship with politics. According to Aristotle, “we are all political animals, capable of using language to pursue our own ends” (Chilton, 2004, as cited in Fukunaga & Zhang, 2007). Discourse is the actual use of language in any area of social practice, and it can be classified into various types such as business discourse, educational discourse, health discourse, political discourse, and so on. This study falls under the broad category of political discourse, which includes a variety of sub-discourses or genres such as parliamentary debate, election campaigns, party slogans, congress mottoes, and so on. This study aimed to critically analyze the mottoes of EPRDF coalition parties used in their 2018 annual congresses in order to uncover the parties’ ideological positions.

Despite the fact that coalition parties are expected to cooperate and work toward common goals, EPRDF coalition parties have polarized ideologies. The ideological polarization of the coalition parties was reflected in the mottoes of the 2018 annual congresses held by each party. A motto is a short phrase that expresses a belief or guiding principle of a group or organization. A motto can be used by a company or a group for a variety of purposes. Mottoes can be used by political organizations to create new ideologies, change existing ideologies, or sustain them. Political parties may also use slogans to remind their members and supporters of who they are, and what they stand for. People employ mottoes as guiding principles to motivate and inspire their followers.

Language choice in the production of a political motto is made based on the ideological position of the political parties or groups, and the ideological message portrayed in the mottoes is enacted through the language elements used by the parties. To use Fairclough’s term, language is both constituted in social practice and constitutive of social practice. Language is used not only to convey a message, but it is also used to create a new reality. The language users, the producers of the mottoes, in this case, use language to shape the current public matters or discourses based on their ideology. In other words, the language or discourse of the mottoes is not neutral rather it is loaded with the ideology of the producers.

Scholars have attempted to attribute neutral and negative meanings to the conceptualization of ideology. Ideology, from the neutral perspective, is a system of ideas and beliefs shared by a group, whereas its negative meaning is a distortion of reality that masks real social relations (Larrain, 1979; Thompson, 1984). For Fairclough (1989), a neutral use of ideology is to use it as a synonym with ‘world view’, so that any group has its ideology corresponding to its interests and positions in social life. Viewing negatively, Fairclough (1989) perceives ideology as an instrument for producing, reproducing and sustaining dominant relations of power.

Ideology becomes common sense when people are no longer aware of hierarchies and power relations (Fairclough, 1995). Ideology as common sense which refers to the commonly accepted and taken for granted assumptions and practices is achieved through naturalization. Such ideological naturalization has resulted in the practice of ideological rationalization which refers to explanations and reasons offered to justify common sense or naturalized ideology (Simpson, 1993, as cited in Chaka, 2006). Language or discourse has a dialectical relation with ideology as it has a significant role in the process of naturalizing ideology and ideology determines the choice of linguistic elements. Thus, ideology serves to maintain social relations through manipulating language or meaning with a view to hiding or obscuring those relations (Fairclough, 1995).

An Ideology which is very much related to power and domination is located in language (Fairclough, 1995). Because everything that is said or written is expressed from a particular ideological point of view, there are always different ways of saying or writing the same thing. In this respect, Fowler (1991) states that the world of language use in any social practice is not the
real world, but a world skewed and judged according to the ideological intention of the language users. In this regard, Gee (1990) states that ideology is upside down of reality signifying the role of language use in the process of covering or inverting the reality. Richardson (2007) adds that “things in any social practice are not really the way the elite and the powerful believe to them to be; rather their beliefs invert reality to make it appear the way they would like it to be if their power is to be enhanced and sustained.” Such instrumental representation and construction of ideology require a critical investigation, and therefore, if the concept of ideology is to be used, it should be used critically (Fairclough, 1995). Because of these underlying assumptions, scholars attempt to analyze language use of any social practice in order to uncover the ideology hidden beyond the language. A relatively recent methodology used by many researchers in their attempt of understanding the ideological intention of language use is critical discourse analysis.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA henceforth) is a theory and a method of investigating the way that individuals and institutions use language. Critical discourse analysts focus on social problems and especially, the role of discourse or language in the production and reproduction of power abuse and domination (Van Dijk, 1994). The aim of CDA is to unpack the connections among discourse practices, social practices and social structures which may not be transparent for the public (Sheyholslami, 2001). According to Fairclough (1995), CDA which is used to unpack hidden messages in everyday language use is one of the approaches of discourse analysis. Fiske (1994) adds that language use is not neutral rather it is loaded with the interest of speakers or writers. The shared objective of the above-mentioned scholars of using CDA is to uncover the ideologies or assumptions that are hidden behind the words of the written texts or oral speech. In other words, the underlying assumption in CDA is that words are never neutral but reflect the interests of writers or speakers. The meanings conveyed by the words are influenced by the immediate social, political, institutional and historical contexts or conditions. Based on these assumptions, CDA can be applied to any form of language be it written or spoken.

The political motto is one of the potential areas where CDA can be applied in order to make a thorough investigation and understanding of the discursive strategies used in the production of the motto and the ideology enacted in the motto. In this study, I intended to apply CDA to the mottoes used by the EPRDF coalition parties in their 2018 annual congresses which have been held immediately after the political reform of the country, Ethiopia.

Using Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional framework of critical discourse analysis, I demonstrated the systematic choice of discursive strategies made by the coalition parties to enact and portray their ideological positions in relation to the current political reform of the country. In doing this, Fairclough’s integrated analysis of texts, processes of text production, and sociopolitical contexts has been employed to uncover the ideological polarity in the language of the mottoes used by the coalition parties. This is because language is not seen as a means of reflecting out reality, but as a way of creating reality, and the use of CDA enabled me to find out the hidden ideological positions of the parties behind the seemingly simple and plain words.

1.2. Statement of the problem
Both theoretical and practical reasons can be attributed to the why of this study. Theoretically, my professional background in critical discourse analysis always inspires me to look at the language used in any social context. In September 2018 when the coalition parties of EPRDF were having their annual congresses, I was watching the news about the congresses on television. Meanwhile, I gave special attention to the mottoes of the parties hoping that I could understand the specific agenda of each party and the overall common agenda as coalition parties of EPRDF. However, looking at each lexical item of the mottoes, I came to realize that the parties had different agenda that positioned them in polarized directions. As a result, I was highly motivated to apply critical discourse analysis and systematically investigate the connection between the linguistic elements of the mottoes and the ideological positions intended by the political parties. Thus, I believe that
doing such a research work could have a theoretical contribution in adding knowledge about how to understand the hidden agenda of language users.

Practically, because the year 2018 was the time of political confusion in the country, Ethiopia, a critical understanding of political language use of that time was significant. It was the time of the political reform that was followed by political turmoil in the country, and it was not uncommon to hear about political conspiracy through both the social and some mainstream media. Such a political situation together with fake news and hate speech circulated on social media led the country into political instability. Hence, investigating political discourse like the mottoes of such a special events could expose the reality of the current political conditions.

Moreover, the September 2018 annual congresses of the EPRDF coalition parties were held while the country was in such a political situation when language use of political events was given high attention. It was the time even an utterance made by a member of a political party could lead to ethnic-based political tension. Thus, doing a critical analysis of political mottoes in such political conditions is timely and relevant to describe the discursive strategies and unpack the ideological positions of the political parties that reside on the lexical items of the mottoes.

1.3. Objectives of the study
The general objective of this study is to critically analyze the mottoes used by the EPRDF coalition parties in their 2018 annual congresses and to expose the ideological polarity of the political parties. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. describe the discursive strategies used by the coalition parties of EPRDF in the production of their mottoes of the 2018 annual congresses;
2. uncover the ideological polarity which is enacted through a strategic choice of discursive elements by the coalition parties of EPRDF in the production of their mottoes of the 2018 annual congresses;

1.4. Significance of the study
The findings of this study could have contributions for different bodies. First, because CDA is a theoretical and analytical method that enables researchers to find out the reality which is covered by language, a study of this kind will uncover the hidden ideology and create awareness for both the producer and consumers of the political discourse, particularly to the genre of a political motto. Second, because CDA is relatively a new field of research that serves as a theoretical and methodological framework, this study will have a role in adding new knowledge to the academic community. Once people are informed of this kind of methodology, they start to see any act of language use critically. Finally, this study will have its own role for future researchers. Both the framework (CDA) and the data (political motto) of this study will be a resource for other researchers who want to do research on other political genres like, the discourse of election campaign, parliamentary debate, political slogans, etc.

2. Theoretical framework: Critical discourse analysis (CDA)
Critical Discourse Analysis is an approach to doing Discourse Analysis (a subdiscipline of Discourse Analysis). Drawing on post-structuralist discourse theory and critical linguistics, CDA focuses on how social relations, inequality, ideology, discrimination, bias, identity, knowledge and power are constructed and signaled through written and spoken texts. CDA came into being with social issues and social problems in mind and with the idea that there is unequal access to linguistic and social resources. It is so multidisciplinary and hence it is informed by different theoretical views. Accordingly, it draws insights from different theoretical and methodological assumptions from disciplines such as anthropology, psychology and sociology (Fairclough, 1995). Of course, CDA has both linguistic and social dimensions. Using CDA as an analytical framework and methodological tool, therefore, it is possible to analyze how ideology
is produced, reproduced and sustained through the strategic use of language by writers or speakers.

Critical of discourse analytic methodology, CDA helps to reveal (unpack) how language works by drawing insights from wider social and political contexts (Wooffitt, 2005). Social science researchers see CDA both as a theory and a method. As already mentioned, political discourse is one of the many institutional discourses that CDA researchers are interested in. The critical analysis of discourse reveals that those who are privileged to have access to social and institutional power dominate the discourse of political practice and use the discourse to manipulate the reality based on their ideological intention. Of course, the goal of CDA is to reveal this fact in discourse by drawing attention to power imbalances, social inequities and the manipulative tendency people have in discursive practices (Wooffitt, 2005).

In making a critical analysis, CDA, therefore, tries to link linguistic features to wider contexts of social, cultural, political and economic structures with an emancipatory goal to uncover how discourse disadvantages minority or relatively powerless groups (Wooffitt, 2005). Given its established goal and focus of analysis, CDA is believed to be one appropriate analytical approach to examine the role of discourse in the (re)production of power and social inequalities in terms of unequal access to linguistic opportunities in the context of political discourse.

CDA is claimed to be an important analytical tool to explain the philosophical assumptions or the ideological orientations of participants through their language use, to describe how they construct their identities and others discursively and why they do it the way they do it, that is, their motives and underlying reasons in their uses of language. Accordingly, the concept of “ideology”, among others, is one important issue in CDA as it is embedded in texts. This suggests that as texts (both spoken and written) are not neutral, the ideology behind texts need to be unveiled through CDA as an appropriate methodological approach. In this study, CDA is applied to the discourse of political mottoes particularly, mottoes of EPRDF coalition parties used in their 2018 annual congresses to analyze the discursive practices of the mottoes and to explain the ideological polarity of the coalition parties. In doing so, I have adopted Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional framework of analysis which is represented diagrammatically below.

According to Fairclough, there are three levels in analyzing discourse. These include discourse as: a) Text (the actual text) b) discursive practice (involves processes of text production, distribution and consumption and c) social practice (the larger sociopolitical context which may have influenced the creation of the text- which takes into consideration the underlying sociopolitical and power structures in society). At this level, discourse is explained in relation to ideology and power relationships. Accordingly, Fairclough’s discourse analysis involves descriptive, interpretive and explanatory processes at the levels of text, discursive practice and social practice respectively. In this study, therefore, the text refers to the mottoes produced by the coalition parties of EPRDF. And the discursive practice is related to how the text of the mottoes is produced, distributed and understood. The level of social practice in this study is related to the sociopolitical and ideological contexts that determine the choice of discursive strategies in the production of the mottoes.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Design of the study
The design of the study is a qualitative case study that entirely focused on specific mottoes that were made by the coalition parties of EPRDF in their 2018 annual congresses.

3.2. Data of the study
The data of this study are the mottoes of the EPRDF coalition parties used in their 2018 annual congresses. Applying the comprehensive sampling technique, I have taken all the mottoes of the four parties from the main stream media as presented in the following table.
3.3. Methods and procedures of data analysis: critical discourse analysis

The data (the mottoes) in this study were examined through the lens of critical discourse analysis. Using CDA, an attempt has been made to comprehend how ideology is exercised and enacted in the discourse of the congress mottoes. This is due to the fact that, in addition to the linguistic analysis, the critical analysis assisted in critically analyzing the socio-political aspects of language use. As a result, CDA is an important analytical tool for determining how ideological relationships among coalition parties manifest. The different underlying motivations and ideologies, assumptions, implications and presuppositions of the producers of the mottoes have been analyzed critically. In doing so, why the parties did (produced) the mottoes the way they did it has been revealed through the analytic tool of CDA. To this end, Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional analytical framework which sees discourse as text, discursive practice and social practice has been used. In general, the analysis of the data has both linguistic and social dimensions. In other words, the analysis has been made not only based on linguistic data (micro-analysis), but also based on social dimension (macro-analysis) as it takes into account the socio-political contexts.

4. Analysis and interpretation

In this part of the study, an attempt has been made to analyze and interpret the mottoes of the parties. Applying CDA, I integrated the description of discursive strategies and interpretation of ideological implications. In doing so, the mottoes of the parties have been used as subheadings of the analysis.

4.1. The Motto of the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP)

4.1.1. “Continuity of the reform for the benefit and democratic unity of Amhara peoples”

The motto of the Amhara Democratic Party’s (ADP) 12th annual congress has represented the new reform as the best achievement of the people and the party, and protecting and sustaining the reform is the only option for the people and the party’s survival. The new reform is portrayed as a guiding principle or ideology in the ADP motto, and thus ADP could be described as a party with a reformist ideology as opposed to a status quo ideology. The reformist ideology is reflected in the motto’s lexical items. In the motto of ADP’s annual congress, for example, the word reform is directly stated and foregrounded (placed at the beginning). This could be interpreted as a deliberate use of the word to emphasize and acknowledge the current political system, implying that the party has acknowledged the reform.

The other lexical item that ADP purposefully used in the motto to acknowledge the existence of the current political reform is “continuity.” The use of the word “continuity” implies the existence of something, as it is impossible to discuss the continuity of something without its existence. Thus, assuming that reform exists in the current political system, ADP attempts to establish a shared or known facts about the existence of reform that cannot be denied.

The ADP has also recognized current political reform by including the word “benefit” in the motto of its 12th annual congress. The use of the lexical item ‘benefit’ appears to be done on purpose in order to imply two meanings. On the one hand, it could be argued that the people of Amhara have never been benefited; rather, they have faced economic and political discrimination prior to the reform. As a result, maintaining the new reform is the Amhara people’s only option; otherwise, the people will fall into the hands of the previous system, which is considered a rival of the Amhara people. On the other hand, the use of the term “benefit” may imply that ADP and the Amhara people are skeptical of the new reform. This is to say that the party may intend to warn reformist members that unless the reform provides equal and fair benefits to the Amhara people, the reform's sustainability will be jeopardized.

Unlike the mottoes of the other member parties, the ADP’s congress motto includes the name of the ethnic group “Amhara.” Because the ADP has been criticized for its loyalty to the previous political system, mentioning the name of the ethnic group “Amhara” appears to be a deliberate choice to admit that the people of Amhara have been oppressed by the previous political system.
After admitting the previous, the party attempts to promise to do better and to demonstrate loyalty to the people of Amhara by using the collective name “Amhara.”

The adjective “democratic,” which modifies the noun “unity,” is also used in the ADP’s motto.

Aspiring for “democratic unity” presupposes prior experience with undemocratic unity. In fact, ADP has presented “reform continuity” as an instrumental requirement or precondition for democratic equality and people’s unity at both the regional and national levels. Of course, by stating the role of the reform for democratic unity in the motto of such a special event, annual congress’, the party, ADP, may be attempting to express its fear that the reform will not bring democratic unity to the people.

The use of these discursive strategies clearly demonstrates that the ADP is condemning the previous political system while attempting to legitimize the current political reform. This, in turn, indicates that the ADP favors the reformist side of the ideological polarity over the status quo ideologists.

4.2. The Motto of the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP)

4.2.1. “Better ideas for more Victory”

The Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), which is thought to be the reform’s leader in collaboration with the ADP, is one of the coalition parties of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). On 20 September 2018, the ODP held its 9th annual congress with the motto “better ideas for more Victory,” while enjoying reform and holding the top position, that of Prime Minister. The words chosen for the congress motto may indicate the party’s current and future political agenda (ODP).

On a scale of reformist versus status quo ideologies, the ODP could be considered at the far end of the reformist spectrum. This is because, while the party has not explicitly mentioned the reform in its motto, it has implicitly confirmed that the reform has unquestionably been completed, and the party aspires to achieve other goals in the future. For example, the deliberate use of the comparative adjective ‘more’ implies the existence of the reform, which is already owned and being compared to other future accomplishments.

In the congress’s motto, the ODP has used the comparative adjective “better” to modify the noun “ideas.” The phrase “better ideas” can be interpreted from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it could imply that the party used it to contrast the party’s reformist ideas with those of other parties that have already been defeated, particularly the TPLF, which was the coalition party’s and the country’s leader. On the other hand, the party may intend to compare its current idea, which enabled them to win and bring the reform, with its own other ideas, which could lead them to achieve other goals in the future by winning other groups.

Furthermore, the phrase “better ideas” is used in the party’s motto to legitimize the party’s hegemony, which was built through consensus rather than coercion.

The phrase “more victory” can be interpreted in a variety of ways. The use of the phrase “more victory” implies the existence of another victory that has already been won. It could be inferred that the current victory is the reform, which is thought to have been achieved in collaboration with other parties such as ADP, but in the motto of its congress, ODP attempts to claim ownership of the reform. The use of the lexical item ‘victory’ implies the presence of enemies or conflict. Thus, by using the phrase “more victory,” the ODP portrays previous enemies who have already been defeated as well as other unnamed enemies who will be defeated in the future. Such a strategic choice of linguistic elements in the ODP’s motto confirms the party’s position on the ideological polarity continuum at the extreme end of the reformist ideology.
4.3. The Motto of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF)

4.3.1. “Congress of unity and determination for our renaissance”
Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), one of the coalition parties that has been leading the EPRDF, held its 13th annual congress on 25 September 2018, under the slogan “congress of unity and determination for our renaissance.” The TPLF is found to be pro status quo and anti reformist ideology on the continuum that shows the positions of the parties in relation to reformist versus status quo ideology.

This proposition could be supported by the strategic selection of lexical items used in the congress’s motto.

The term “renaissance,” which emerged during the TPLF’s leadership of the government system, appears to have been purposefully used in the TPLF’s congress motto to represent the status quo ideology. The term “renaissance,” which literally means “rebirth,” refers to the period from the 14th to the 17th centuries that marked the revival of classical culture and the beginning of modern science. This lexical item, renaissance, has been introduced into Ethiopian political discourse since the TPLF took power in 1991. The term “renaissance” was introduced into political discourse by the TPLF, whose origins are in the northern part of Ethiopia, where the Ethiopian civilization is thought to have originated. The Axumite dynasty, thought to be the origin of Ethiopian civilization, demonstrated the pinnacle of various arts and architectures.

Thus, the explicit goal of introducing the lexical item “renaissance” appears to be to aspire to the rebirth of the country’s ancient civilization and to encourage people to support the party in order to achieve that goal.

The introduction and frequent use of the term “renaissance” may also have an implicit purpose.

The term could refer to the rebirth of the political power among the Tigrians, who are descended from the Axumite dynasty. That is, because the TPLF believes that the people of Tigray were oppressed by the previous political system, their ascension to power in 1991 appears to be viewed as a rebirth or revival of their ancestors’ political power, the Axumite dynasty. As a result, the term “renaissance” has been used ambiguously to mean both the revival of ancient civilizations and the rebirth of ancestors’ political power.

The use of the phrase “congress of unity and determination for our renaissance” in the motto of their 13th annual congress clearly demonstrates the TPLF’s position in relation to the reformists.

While the slogans of the other parties, particularly the ODP and ADP, focus on reform, which is the country’s top current issue, the TPLF focuses on the previous discourse, which is renaissance. The utterance could be interpreted in two ways in this regard.

On the one hand, it could be interpreted as the party attempting to resist the new reform and preserving the old discourse, renaissance, and status quo. On the other hand, the party may want to use this utterance to resurrect and defeat the reformists, and thus reclaim their previous political power.

TPLF attempts to enhance and sustain the status quo ideology by using the compound structure “unity and determination” as a causal agent for the survival of renaissance. This indicates that the TPLF is at the opposite end of the ideological polarity spectrum from the reformists.

4.4. The Motto of the Southern Ethiopian Peoples’ Democratic Movement (SEPDM)

4.4.1. “Unity of peoples for comprehensive reform”
The Southern Ethiopian Peoples’ Democratic Movement (SEPDM) is found to be neutral on the ideological polarity continuum represented by the competing ideologies of status quo versus
reform. The slogan “Unity of Peoples for Comprehensive Reform” is used to produce this position discursively. The use of the adjective “comprehensive” to modify the word “reform” implies the reform’s partiality and the party’s reservations about the current reform. In other words, SEPDM envisions a genuine reform that will be realized in the future when the people of the region unite.

The phrase “unity of peoples” could be interpreted to mean that the party prioritized people integration and political stability in the region. Because there was an interethnic conflict in the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples’ region, which is made up of multiple ethnic groups, the party emphasized people unity rather than reform. Thus, SEPDM is found to be relatively liberal in relation to the ideological polarity manifested as status quo versus reform.

5. Discussions
According to the findings of this study, the coalition parties’ mottos represent the parties’ ideological position in relation to Ethiopia’s current political reform. This is consistent with Fairclough’s (1995) notion that language is used not only to convey a message, but also to produce, reproduce, or sustain one’s ideology. The language users’, the producers of the mottos, in this case, used language to shape the current public matters or discourses based on their ideology. In other words, the language or discourse of the mottos is not found neutral rather it is loaded with the ideology of the parties. Thus, the coalition parties’ slogans represent two polarized ideologies, also known as competing discourses. In some of the mottos, parties portray themselves as pro-reform and anti-status quo, whereas in others, parties portray themselves as anti-reform and pro-status quo. As a result, the four EPRDF coalition parties are found to be on a continuum, with reformist ideology at one end and pro-status quo ideology at the other.

Status Quo Ideology Reformist Ideology

TPLF SEPDM ADP ODP

The names of political parties also confirm the parties’ ideological position on the continuum. While the ODP and ADP, formerly known as the OPDO and ANDM, respectively, have positioned themselves as pro-reformists, the TPLF, which has retained its previous name, has positioned itself as anti-reformist ideology or pro-status quo. SEPDM, which retained its previous name, is positioned near the middle of the spectrum, indicating the party’s liberal position in relation to the two polarized ideologies, reform versus status quo.

The analysis of the coalition parties’ mottos revealed that the political parties used a variety of discursive strategies to achieve their ideological interest in the creation of their mottos.

In this regard, Fowler (1991) claims that the world of language use in any social practice is skewed and judged according to the ideological intention of the language users. Presuppositions, comparative adjectives, and ambiguity are identified as major linguistic strategies used in the slogans of the EPRDF coalition parties. The study’s findings also show that the ideological positions of political parties influence the strategic choice of such linguistic elements, and that the choices of linguistic strategies appear to produce, reproduce, and sustain political party interest. This is supported by Fairclough’s (1995) line of thought, which states that language is both constituted in and constitutive of social practice.

6. Conclusion
The study looked at how the language of political slogans is used to construct ideologies. The study specifically attempted to critically analyze the mottos of the EPRDF coalition parties’ 2018 annual congresses. It was discovered that the parties used lexical presuppositions in their discursive practice (the creation of the mottos), and their choice of discursive elements is influenced by their hidden ideological positions. And, of course, the coalition parties’ slogans masked and represented their ideological positions.
In sum, the study’s findings show that, while coalition parties are expected to plan and work toward a common goal, EPRDF coalition parties have been found to have polarized ideologies manifested as pro reformists versus pro status quo, as portrayed in the parties’ 2018 annual congress mottoes. Furthermore, the study concludes that critical discourse analysis allows researchers to uncover such ideological positions hidden behind seemingly simple and straightforward words.

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