

**Language Use And Ideology In Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears Of The Delta* And Stephen
Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky***

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Abstract

*The works of Nigerian writers, particularly of the third generation writers have been examined from pragmatic, stylistics, socio-linguistic, and historical perspectives with inadequate scholarly attention paid to eco-critical ideologies in their works, especially in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*. This study, therefore, examines how ideologies are lexically constructed in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky* to reveal discursive issues that characterize Nigerian eco-critical works. This study adopted Systemic Functional Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Descriptive Eco-criticism as theoretical frameworks. Two Nigerian eco-critical writers are purposefully selected, namely Ibiwari Ikiriko and Stephen Kekeghe. One of their literary texts, which is ideologically driven is selected. The anthologies are *Oily Tears of the Delta* by Ibiwari Ikiriko and *Rumbling Sky* by Stephen Kekeghe. Eco-critical writers are committed to environmental revolutions. The study has revealed that eco-critical issues are realities in Nigeria.*

Key words: *ideologies, eco-criticism, Nigerian writers, Oily Tears of the Delta, Rumbling Sky*

Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that no literary work of arts is devoid of literary ideology. Every literary work of art projects ideological stands through which the work communicates. Every literary artiste is endowed with distinct ideological prowess; hence, such an artiste expresses the cultural, political, social, environmental, eco-critical and ideological inclinations of a particular society. Many writers have critically portrayed the happenings and realities in their environments through characterization, setting, plot structures and other literary elements, particularly the eco-critical writers in Nigeria.

The emergence of eco-critical writers in Nigerian space has attracted research works from varying degrees of perspectives such as stylistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and so on. These scholarly researches have paid insufficient attention to inherent ideological inclinations in eco-critical works especially Ibiwari Ikiriko and Stephen Kekeghe (Ugwu, 2014; Alo and Ayinuola, 2017; Salihu, 2019; Ayinuola and Eugenie (ND); Babatunde, 2020, and Ayinuola, 2020). The ideological prowess is conspicuous in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Tears of Oily the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*. These Delta-born revolutionary poets champion the course of agitating for the emancipation of the neglected Niger Delta region. The world at large is passing through a lot of problems, ranging from insecurities, political instability, moral decadence, and maladministration at various levels of governance. In Nigeria, specifically, the exploration and exploitation of the Niger Delta region, which is the nation's financial power house because of the discovery of Crude Oil in the region is a serious problem to the people of the region. It is of paramount importance to state that the examination of Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky* and Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* is a timely response to eco-degradation, annihilation, and marginalisation of African society, Nigeria as a nation, the world at large, and particularly the Niger Delta region. For decades now, the "Niger Deltans" are wallowing in abject poverty because of environmental degradation. The exploration of crude oil in the region has caused great havoc in the region. The oil-ridden region is not able to engage in agriculture, worse still, the government abandons the region financially. This ugly and sorry situation necessitates the cry of these revolutionary poets. The poets have put their opinions. This study examines eco-critical ideologies in selected works of Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky* with a view of unmasking the thematic preoccupations as well as ideological inclinations inherent in the texts.

Statement of the Problem

Extant works have researched eco-critical discourse and ideological inclinations in Nigerian (literary) texts. For instance, Salihu (2019) worked on ecological devastation, exploitation, and the struggle of the Niger Delta people. Using Eco-criticism and Post-colonialism theories, he thrashed the issues of marginalization and oppression of the region. The paper found out that the region's biodiversities have been affected or outrightly destroyed by the oil spillage. Conversely, this study has not examined eco-critical ideologies in the text. Ayinuola and Eugenie (ND) worked on an ecocritical perspective of the Niger Delta environment. They found out that poetry of protest is very common in the Nigerian literary landscape, and that it is relevant and related to the sociocultural institution. Using selected works of some Niger Delta poets such as Gabriel Okara, J.P. Cark, Ibiwari Ikiriko, Tanure Ojaide, Ken Saro Wiwa, Nnimmo Bassey and so on, they discovered that ecocritical poetry has brought national and international awareness to the realities of ecological imperialism and exploitation of the region. However, the work gave little or no attention to ideological lexicalization which forms the locus of this research.

Ugwu, Chinonye Calista (2014) researched ecological degradation, which plagues the Niger Delta region. Specifically, the study discovered that the bulk of the Niger Delta region's problem is the issue of environmental degradation in the region and decried the appalling state of the Niger Delta people. The study found that devastation is noticeable on land and water as well as the flora and fauna of the Niger Delta. Similarly, Oluseye Abiodun Babatunde (2020) worked on ecocritical issues in Nigeria. Using eco-criticism as a theoretical framework, the study discovered that environmental issues and problems encountered in Nigerian society include despoliation of air and water through pollution, deforestation and desertification, oil spillage, waste management and soil degradation, among others. The paper found out that the demise of Ken Saro-Wiwa engendered and accentuated environmental injustice. Nevertheless, much attention was not given to ideological inclinations, which are the preoccupations of this research work.

Similarly, Alo and Ayinuola (2017) examined how national identities are discursively constructed in national anthems of selected African states. Situated within Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics and Wodakian Discourse Historical Approach of Critical Discourse Analysis, the paper asserts that ideological inclinations inherent in selected anthems helped in the understanding of socio-political, religious and economic realities in African anthems. While Alo

and Ayinuola (2017) examine ideologies in the anthems of selected African states, the current study focuses on the ideological inclinations of two Nigerian eco-critical writers. Equally, Ayinuola (2020) investigates how ideological inclinations are lexicalised in the national anthems of selected African states. The paper discovered that territorialism, pan-Africanist, theism, historicism and egalitarianism are prominent ideologies that characterized national anthems of selected African states. The paper concludes that national anthems refract realities in the African context. While Ayinuola (2020) is concerned with ideological inclinations in the national anthems, the current study focuses on the examination of eco-critical ideologies in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*.

From the foregoing, it can be observed that existing research has paid insufficient scholarly attention to the thematic preoccupations as well as ideological inclinations in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*. This study, therefore, examines ideological inclinations in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky* to reveal prominent eco-critical ideologies in Ibiwari Ikiriko and Stephen Kekeghe's works.

Aim and objectives

This study investigates language use and ideology in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky* to show how lexical devices explicate eco-critical ideologies in selected poems. To achieve the above aim, the following specific objectives are set: (a) to identify and explain thematic preoccupations in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*; (b) to identify and explain lexical choices in Ibiwari Ikiriko's "Oily Tears" and Stephen Kekeghe's "Rumbling Sky"; (c) finally, to discuss ideological inclinations inherent in the selected anthologies.

Theoretical framework

The study uses Systemic Functional Linguistics complemented by descriptive eco-criticism as well as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretical framework. Eco-criticism is an umbrella term under which a variety of approaches fall. According to Lawrence Buell, eco-criticism is an increasingly heterogeneous movement, which focusses on the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Eco-criticism has been, and is an "earth-centred approach." Human culture is undoubtedly connected to the physical world, affecting and being affected by it. Eco-criticism is interdisciplinary, calling for collaboration between natural

scientists, writers, literary critics, anthropologists, historians and more. The preoccupation of eco-criticism examines the world around us by critiquing the way we represent, interact with, and construct the environment, both natural and manmade. Eco-criticism is committed to the environment from whatever vantage point and is viewed as the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyse the environment and search for possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental challenges. Eco-criticism thus considers the non-human agents as capable of being perceived independently and pivotal in the scheme of natural things rather than being seen as adjuncts to human beings. Eco-criticism alerts us to how human activities pose a threat to our natural environment and raises consciousness of the dangers inherent in living carelessly with nature. This accounts for why Bate (2002), in his book titled, *The Song of the Earth* asserts that 'eco-criticism began in consciousness-raising'. The eco-critical literary theory emerged from an ever-increasing enlightened consciousness and concern about the state of the global environment. The ethical acceptability of the systematic, institutionalized killing of non-human and others" (Barry, 1995: 213) by the industrialized world is one of the reasons for categorizing other peoples as animals and thus justifying the liberty to exploit colonies, their environment and the general eco-system for economic ends.

Similarly, Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language that is centred on the notion of the function of language. SFL accounts for the syntactic structure of language as well as the function of language that is what language does and how it does it in preference to more structural approaches, which place the elements of language and their combination as central. SFL focuses on social context and examines how language, both acts upon, and is constrained by this social context. According to Halliday (1999), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is significant because it accounts for the use of language according to context. The systemic dimension is premised on the fact that language is a structured sign system used by speakers for meaning construction whereby the selection of one system excludes another. A central notion is "stratification", such that language is analysed in four strata, Context, Semantics, Lexico-Grammar and Phonology- Graphology. The context concerns the field (what is going on), the Tenor (the social roles and relationships between the participants), and the mode (aspects of the channel of communication, e.g., monologic, dialogic, spoken/written, visual contact and so on).

Furthermore, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a growing interdisciplinary research movement that combined different theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of language. It is noteworthy that CDA was first developed by Lancaster school of Linguistics of which Norman Fairclough was the foremost prominent figure. Ruth Wodak has also made a major contribution to this field. Norman Fairclough (1995) defines Critical Discourse Analysis thus:

to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events, and text, and (b) wider, social and cultural structure, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, texts and events arise out and ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

van Dijk (2003) opines that CDA primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality is enacted, reproduced, and resisted in texts and talks. Furthermore, CDA is a form of social practice, that deals with analyzing the opaque as well as the transparent structural relationship as manifested in language. Furthermore, according to van Dijk (1998), CDA is a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. It examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced in text and talk. Thus, CDA is socially constituted and constitutive.

From the foregoing, it can be observed that descriptive ecocriticism, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis are utilised as theoretical orientations. descriptive eco-criticism accounts for thematic eco-critical preoccupations and SFL caters for lexical choices that characterized the selected texts, while CDA explicates ideological inclinations prominent in Ibiwari Ikiriko's "Oily Tears of the Delta" and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*.

Methodology

The source of data for this study was Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*. These texts were purposively selected because they were eco-critical ideology-laden. The study analyses poems that explicate the specific objectives of this study. The data are subjected to thematic, ideology, and eco-critical analyses. Tables showing the

thematization of eco-critical issues and ideological inclinations with lexical indices are explicated on the next page:

Table 1: Table showing thematic eco-critical issues with lexical choices indicating them

s/n	Thematic eco-critical issues	Lexical choices
1	Wickedness and inhumanity	sapped socket, hacked heart, and broken breasts, sorrow without sympathy , of wealth without worth , of religion without morality and so on
2	Insecurity	decapitate you for wriggling maggots, hackers of humanity, in your dying and death .
3	Election and Electioneering	Before the ballots , Merchants of power chameleonic costumes, monotones of freedom

Data Analysis and Presentation

It is apposite first to identify and explain thematic preoccupations in the texts, followed by the identification and explanation of these lexical choices, and finally, discuss ideological inclinations inherent in selected texts.

Thematization of eco-critical issues in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky*

Several eco-critical thematic issues in Ibiwari Ikiriko's *Oily Tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe's *Rumbling Sky* include wickedness and inhumanity, insecurity, election and electioneering.

Wickedness and inhumanity

Wickedness and inhumanity are major eco-critical thematic issues that characterise Ibiwari Ikiriko's "Oily Tears of the Delta" and Stephen Kekeghe's "Rumbling Sky". Wickedness refers to inhuman treatment meted on people. In the poem titled *Ritual Magnates*, for instance, the poetic persona writes a tribute to Elizino Ogege, the 22-year-old first-class student of the Department of Mass Communication of Delta State University, Abraka, who was murdered by suspected ritualists known as "Yahoo plus" on November 15, 2018. In the poem, the poet

lamentably depicts the type of wicked society we are in. He makes use of the brutal murder of Elizino as the case study which is a replica of the contemporary world. This is exemplified below:

Excerpt 1:

Elizino, the sad story of your **sapped socket**
hacked heart and broken breasts.

The heartless Yahoo boys slaughtered the lady as a cow is slaughtered in an abattoir. This lady, Elizino Joshuallia Ogege, aged 22, a 300-level student of Mass Communication, DELSU, Abraka was reportedly killed by Yahoo boys. This ugly occurrence is now very rampant in our country where the lives of the people are of no value to those people who are devil-incarnate. This same incidence has become the order of the day among youths who are inordinately seeking wealth by all means. The tactical deployment of synecdoche reveals how the lady was a machete for money rituals. Sensitive organs of her body such as the heart, breast and other parts were removed and used for rituals. This is the major reason the poet employs “sapped socket” and “broken breast”. This ugly trend has become so rampant among the youth.

The poet explicates the youths involved in money rituals to get rich at all costs. The people shed innocent blood to become rich overnight. The youths (teenagers) aspire to have exotic cars - Venza, Range Rover, through swindling. The common slogan in society now is "the end justifies the means". People celebrate wealth not minding the source. Currently, society is full of "mad wealth seekers." It is disheartening that Nigerian youths are desperate to become rich overnight. Many young people join groups where they can get rich very quickly and at all costs. Some of the youths are into "yahoo" or "yahoo plus", some become armed robbers, while others take to kidnapping people for random. Furthermore, people are killed for money rituals. Sad still, the politicians are not left out of this menace, some swim in human blood to get power and prosperity, and they embezzle public funds meant public development. Finally, the poet persona sorrowfully explicates how Elizino Ogege was murdered, and many parts of her body removed for money rituals.

In another excerpt, the poetic persona laments the sorrows, immorality and leadership failure that have become the order of the day.

Excerpt 2:

The tale of a **world without a word**

of a people without a place
of sorrow without sympathy
of wealth without worth
of religion without morality
of politics without leadership (Ritual magnates)

Excerpt 2 portrays the true picture of Nigerian society. According to Stephen Kekeghe, myriad people are homeless, many are sorrowful without a comforter explicated through "of wealth without worth." The expression indicates that some people amass wealth to the detriment of the growth and development of Nigerian society. He says the society embraces religion, but morality is lacking in the lives of the people. The society celebrates impunity without liberation.

Insecurity

One of the trending eco-critical issues in the country is the security challenge. It is disheartening that insecurity in the nation is growing exponentially every day. There are cases of insecurity in Nigeria, ranging from brutal killings of innocent people to kidnapping, robbery, assassination and lots more. These dastardly acts are not unconnected to some mind-bordering factors. Insecurity has hijacked the socio-economic and political space of the country in such a perilous fashion that it has snowballed into a horrid nightmare. Disturbingly and painfully, things are rapidly falling apart and the Nigeria centre can no longer hold its constituent parts. Dreams of the citizenry are chaotically, increasingly, and menacingly cascading into mirage and fleeting allusion, as the nation's hypo-dynamic heart is helplessly and hopelessly bleeding to death. Today, Nigeria as a nation is fast retrogressing into a Hobbesian state. The prevalence of conflicts, crises, rancour, social disorder, brutality, man's inhumanity to man, and the existential fear of insecurity is un-abating due to incorrigible, insensitive, corrupt, pre-bender, non-altruistic, egoistic, ethnocentric leadership in the corridor of power.

Other factors responsible for insecurity include lack of proper education, wrong political policies, corruption, and so on. It is generally believed that the life of man in the state of nature is solitary, harsh, wicked and brutal. This is why a social contract is inevitable. Insecurity in Nigeria is on the increase now and then. The major factor of this menace is unemployment. Many unemployed youths now engage themselves in various vices such as armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination, political thuggery and so on, which serve as threats to the nation's security. This is one of the preoccupations of these poets. They lament the rate at which

insecurity has affected the country. Another dimension of insecurity in the country is the menace of the Fulani herdsmen. These people have destroyed many lives in the country, most especially the farmers. The case of brutal killings of farmers on farms is increasing at an alarming rate, especially in the northern part of the country, many people have been liked on farms. Sadly, these heartless herders always go scot-free, this is so probably because they have the support of the people at the helm of affairs. Stephen Kekeghe, in one of his poems, titled "The herders" portrays their evil perpetration thus:

Excerpt 3:

Never wonder
when we **lead** our cattle
to graze with grin of courage
and **decapitate** you
for **wriggling** maggots.

The heartless herders are ready to kill (decapitate) the people to allow their cattle to graze. They perform this evil unchecked; they even have the confidence to tell their victims to cooperate with them whenever they visit their farms. The poet puts it this way,

Excerpt 4:

Absolve us.... partner with us
in your **dying**... in your **death**
we herders of cattle
we **hackers** of humanity.

This is an outright reflection of the weakness of the Nigerian like in the area of security. Insecurity is equally seen as a breach of security and peace in a society, it may occur as a result of the struggle for economic survival. Many people resort to robbery and kidnapping; the most lucrative business in Nigeria today is kidnapping for ransom. It is now a common phenomenon in society that people of timbers and calibres are kidnapped, only for the kidnappers to demand huge amounts of money. The security of the nation is so loosed that government workers and Royal fathers also fall victim. Furthermore, the politicians also contribute to the problem of insecurity in Nigeria. Many of these aspirants use violent people (the thugs) during electioneering campaigns and equip them with weapons, only to abandon them after the election. These people now use weapons to cause havoc in society.

Elections and Electioneering in Nigeria

Stephen Kekeghe examines several deceitful ways by which politicians display during the build-up to the election and how the gimmicks have not yet bridged the inequality gap or solve the nation's myriad of problems. Ideally, the months and year preceding an election should be a time for rigorous, intellectual engagements such as debates, scrutiny of candidates' profiles, achievements, and other important issues crucial to leadership recruitment between the electorates and the political aspirants on the latter's programmes or manifestoes if voted in. In Nigeria, "before the ballots", that is, during the campaign periods, the politicians who are accustomed to being driven in armoured exotic vehicles, tucked in long, heavily guarded convoys, begin to patronize roadside corn sellers, enter commercial buses, help aged women on the street in roasting yam, visit the poor helpless farmers in remote villages and hamlets, among other things that show them that they are men and women of the people. In stanza one, the poet satirically describes their deceitful romance thus:

Excerpt 5:

Before the ballots,
Merchants of power
Wear **chameleonic** costumes
And chant **monotones of freedom**

From excerpt 5 above, the poet satirizes the Nigerian politicians who, during electioneering campaigns, come down from their high tower of pride to relate with the people as a pretext only to get their votes and dumb them again. It can be observed that there is a huge economic inequality between the political elites and the electorates. In Nigeria for instance, politicians, during electioneering campaigns, move from street to street munching corn, dining and wining with the people in pretext. In the poem, the poet's persona employs some literary devices to elucidate his view on the seasonal romance between the politicians and the electorates, in stanza one line three, "chameleonic costumes". The use of 'chameleon' by the poet is symbolic. A Chameleon is a type of lizard that changes its skin colour to match its immediate surroundings. In the same vein, the politicians change their ways of life to deceive the electorates. "bony rats", and "ailing rats" symbolize the hungry electorates, while "fattening cats" denotes robust politicians who prey on the people. In the last stanza, the poet's persona portrays the politicians

as “hungry hustlers of votes”. These lexical items connote that they deceive the people to get their votes at all costs.

The poet poetically reveals the pretentious attitude of the politicians during electioneering campaign periods, the poet persona states that the politicians go to any length to win the heart and votes of the electorates. These deceivers, (the politicians) ‘wear chameleonic costumes; this connotes that they bend so low to achieve their targeted goals. The poet depicts the politicians as pretenders, during electioneering campaigns, they pretend as good people who have the interest of the populace at heart, they have sugar-coated mouths, and when campaigning, they roll out various strategies to win the heart of the people. They present beautiful manifestoes that attract and win the heart of the people.

In stanza one, the poet presents the politicians as “merchants of power” who “wear chameleonic costumes”. This means that they are pretenders who hide their true identity when they need their votes, only to abandon them when they get to power. In stanza two, the poet-persona reveals that the selfish politicians go to every nook and cranny of the nation to seek the support of the poor masses, they go to villages and hamlets to “meet frail faces”, this refers to the people who wallow in abject poverty owing bad governance of the same politicians. The poet fumes that “before the ballots” the greedy politicians bait the helpless masses with “one cruel kobo, not enough to buy the eye of yam.” The expression connotes that the shameless politicians dish out pennies to the electorates to buy their votes only for the people to suffer for another period of cruel governance.

Eco-critical Ideologies in Ibiwari Ikiriko and Stephen Kekeghe’s works

Ideological inclinations in Ibiwari Ikiriko’s “Oily Tears of the Delta” and Stephen Kekeghe’s “Rumbling Sky” include environmentalism, nepotism, tribalism, egalitarianism, and radicalism.

Environmentalism is used as a general term to refer to concern for the environment and particularly actions or advocacy to limit negative human impacts on the environment. Such concerns and actions are not new and the roots of what we now understand to be environmentalism can be traced back to ancient civilizations. Contemporary environmentalism is associated with a range of social and political movements that have emerged to promote particular environmental philosophies and practices. This, undoubtedly is the preoccupation of the poets- Ikiriko, and Kekeghe, in their collections titled “*Oily Tears of the Delta*” and “*Rumbling Sky*”. They agitate for the emancipation of the Niger-Delta, the part of the nation that

suffers environmental degradation as a result of oil exploration. Stephen Kekeghe, in the poem titled “This boom”, laments:

Excerpt 6:

and crude **crawls** into your waters”
“**meanders** into your lands”
“to **choke** your fishes”
“and **kill** your crops.

From the above excerpt, the poet agitates for the emancipation of the Niger-Delta, the part of the nation that suffers environmental degradation as a result of oil exploration. He laments the deplorable condition of the people whose eco-system has been damaged as a result of oil extractions from their landscape. The people of the region are deprived of farming, and fishing, owing to the oil spillage

Another ideology is nepotism. Nepotism can be defined as favouritism towards relatives, usually in the form of offering them jobs. In the public sector, it is considered a particularly toxic phenomenon as it goes against the public interest: citizens generally expect that public employees should deserve their jobs, hired according to merit-based criteria. According to Fisman and Golden, (2017), nepotism breaks the link between employment and meritocracy and can create opportunities for state exploitation. In other words, nepotism imposes costs on society that can range from unfair competition for employment opportunities, (Geys 2017). Aiso, Szakonyi (2019) opines that nepotism has become the cankerworm which has eaten deep into the fabric of society. In Nigeria for example, this practice is rampant in every sector. Both Kekeghe and Ikiriko frown at this evil in their collections. Many key and sensitive positions are given to a particular tribe in the country. The Hausa-Fulani tribe dominates the position of power in the country. Stephen Kekeghe exposes the evil of nepotism perpetrated by Nigerian leaders in his poem titled “The Herders”, in the last stanza of the poem, he comments,

Excerpt 7:

Never wonder
When we **lead** our cattle
To graze with grin of courage
On your green crops
And **decapitate** you

For **wriggling** maggots

According to the above excerpt, it is crystal clear that there is clear-cut nepotism in Nigeria. The Fulani tribe is treated as sacred cows. These people, the cattle rearers encroach into people's farms, feed their cattle with crops on the farm, and even kill farmers who raise eyebrows. Unfortunately, these people always go scot-free because they belong to the tribe of the people in power.

Tribalism is another ideology. Tribalism is the belief that a particular tribe is superior or possesses traits over another tribe. It may also mean prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against other people because they are of a different ethnicity. In the modern day like this tribalism is usually based on social perception of biological differences between peoples. These views can take the form of social actions, practices or beliefs or political systems in which different tribes are ranked as inherently superior or inferior to each other, based on presumed shared inheritable traits, abilities, or qualities. In Nigeria for instance, there is that superiority/inferiority complex syndrome. Some ethnic groups claim superiority over other groups. For instance, the Niger Delta people are referred to as a minority group in the country; hence, they suffer from being marginalized. The move against tribal discrimination makes the poets - Stephen Kekeghe and Ibiwari Ikiriko come out boldly to preach against tribalism in their poems. The case of the killings of the farmers by the Fulani herdsmen is a good example. This ethnic group move freely without any checks even when they destroy farmers and their farms just because their people are in the helms of affairs. Stephen Kekeghe elucidates this unchecked freedom of the Fulani ethnic group in his poem titled "The herders". (page 16). There are different behavioural traits corresponding to the inherited attributes and can be divided based on the superiority of one race over another. It may also mean prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against other people because they are of a different race or ethnicity.

People who subscribe to tribalism tend to believe that their tribe is superior to others. This can lead to bigotry, bias and hatred based on tribe. In the modern day like this, various tribes are usually based on social perceptions of biological differences between peoples. These views can take the form of social actions, practices or beliefs or political systems in which different tribes are ranked as inherently superior or inferior to each other, based on presumed shared inheritable traits, abilities, or qualities. In Nigeria for instance, there is that superiority/inferiority complex syndrome. Some ethnic groups claim superiority over other groups. For instance, the Niger Delta

people are referred to as a minority group in the country, hence, they suffer from being marginalized. The move against tribal discrimination makes the poets - Stephen Kekeghe and Ibiwari Ikiriko come out boldly to preach against tribalism in their poems. Tribalism is well pronounced in Nigeria. The case of the killings of the farmers by the Fulani herdsmen is a good example. This ethnic group move freely without any checks even when they destroy farmers and their farms just because their people are in the helms of affairs. Stephen Kekeghe elucidates this unchecked freedom of the Fulani ethnic group in his poem titled "The herders". (page 16). Also, Ikiriko, in his poem titled "The minority man", laments thus:

Excerpt 8:

Minor minority man
Impotent in bedroom
Bound to fewness
Manacled by the tyranny of numbers
Out-numbered and outmanoeuvred
Insignificant in equations
Without factor, without connection, weightless.

From the excerpt above, the poet lodges his complaint that there is tribal discrimination in Nigeria. Some tribes are seen and treated as second fiddle, especially the Niger-Delta people, they are treated as base, inferior and insignificant in the country. This portrays the inhuman nature of the Nigerian leaders.

Furthermore, egalitarianism is another ideology and it is a political doctrine that holds that all people should be as equal from birth. It is a belief in human equality, especially concerning social, political and economic rights and privileges, and advocates the removal of inequalities among people and discrimination on grounds such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and so on.

Ibiwari Ikiriko solicits an egalitarian society where everyone will have equal rights. This is explicated below:

Except 9

But you, base delta, stay sentenced
To serve only as source and support
Brave Delta, hail but tell all

How long will his sentence last

Ibiwari Ikiriko, like his counterpart, solicits an egalitarian society where everyone will have equal rights, equal privileges, especially in the oil-ridden region of Niger-Delta where the country gets its financial sustenance.

Another striking ideology in the two collections is radicalism. Simply put, radicalism is radical beliefs, ideas, or behaviour towards change. It is the opinion and behaviour of people who desperately want changes, especially in government. Also, in political science, the term radicalism is the belief that society needs to be changed and that these changes are only possible through revolution. In their collections, both Kekeghe and Ikiriko approach the Niger-Delta issues radically. For instance, Kekeghe, in his poem titled, “One day, they will hear my voice” is optimistic when reiterates,

Excerpt 10:

From this thorny wasteland
That I wobble across wearily
The biting scourge of the sun
Has been my companion
And my **sagging** eyes are now open
To the **prodding** pain of betrayer
One day they will hear my voice.

The excerpt above reveals the pain and anguish experienced by the people. Here, the poet speaks the mind of the entire people, how they suffer oppression from the political leaders, he is however optimistic that things will change for better one day.

Conclusion

This study has investigated how ideological inclinations are explicated linguistically in Ibiwari Ikiriko’s *Oily tears of the Delta* and Stephen Kekeghe’s *Rumbling Sky*. The paper discovers that wickedness and inhumanity, insecurity, and electioneering are thematic issues that are prominently deployed in selected texts. Wickedness and inhumanity show man’s oppression of fellow human beings, deceit and protest reveal chameleonic tendencies of the politicians, while election and electioneering reveal that politicians tactically dish out the “eye of the yam” to deceive the electorates. Ideologies in selected texts include environmentalism, nepotism, tribalism, egalitarianism and radicalism. Environmentalism preaches preservation and

conservation of natural resources for human use, nepotism is undue favourism towards one relatives, and tribalism shows that “herders” are privilege, while farmers are less privilege. Similarly, egalitarianism solicit equal treatments, fairness, and justice meted to all irrespective of gender, age, race, political affiliation, and religious subscription. The paper concludes that poetry is not a representation of psyche and emotions of the poet but a conveyor of social realities.

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Discourse Representations Of Hate Speeches In Selected Nigerian Presidential Election Campaigns

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Abstract

Political discourses have earned a significant place in contemporary studies in Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis. Extant studies on campaign speeches have investigated 2015 the discourse from stylistic, sociolinguistic, phonological, and pragmatic viewpoints with insufficient scholarly attention paid to hate speeches in the 2015 Nigerian presidential election campaigns. This study, therefore, investigates the representation of hate speeches in the 2015 Nigerian presidential election campaigns to show the prominent illocutionary force inherent in the campaign. The study adopts Systemic Functional Grammar and Speech Acts as a theoretical framework to account for form function interface. The data were gathered through the internet from some selected sites and advertorials of the two prominent presidential aspirants. The study reveals that thematic preoccupations of hate campaign speeches range from slandering, condemnation, blackmailing, disparaging statements and mudsling, as well as displaying of