

## Discourse Strategies of Defendant's Responses in Court: A Study of Maryam Sanda's *Murder Case*

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### Abstract

*Forensic Discourse Analysis is gaining momentum in the world of linguistics today, especially in Europe and America. However, this field of study has enjoyed fairly little attention from scholars in Nigeria. It is domiciled in Applied Linguistics. This paper deploys discourse-linguistic tools to interrogate the discourse strategies in the responses of Maryam Sanda, accused of murder during cross-examination and re-examination in court. It also deploys framing and stance-taking as essential tools for effective analysis in Forensic Discourse. Teun van Dijk's (2001) Socio-Cognitive Model was found suitable for the analysis of the 112-page document of judgment delivered by Justice Y. Halilu of the Federal High Court, Jabi, Abuja. Purposive sampling method was deployed to select the corpus. The paper found that Maryam Sanda's responses reveal key discourse strategies that align with Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model, including self-positive representation and others-negative representation. Through carefully structured verbal constructions, she portrays herself as a loving wife and mother while subtly demonising the deceased by emphasising his alleged aggression. Findings also reveal that she employs blame-framing and stance-taking to shift responsibility, strategically denying incriminating evidence and portraying the incident as an unfortunate consequence of her husband's actions rather than her own. These findings contribute to forensic linguistics by demonstrating how accused persons use linguistic strategies to construct narratives that mitigate guilt, influence courtroom perceptions, and navigate legal proceedings.*

**Keywords:** *Forensic Discourse Analysis, Defendant, Discourse Strategy, Stance-Taking, Framing*

### Introduction

Forensic discourse analysis has grown as a critical tool in examining legal language, shedding light on how language is used within judicial processes to persuade, defend, or accuse. Discourse analysis in forensic settings often emphasises the study of linguistic structures, speech acts, and pragmatic implications in the context of criminal investigations and court proceedings (Gibbons, 2003). Such analysis can help identify patterns of evasion, mitigation, or self-representation that reveal deeper motivations and psychological states during

testimony (Coulthard, 2004). Additionally, the focus on individual responses within the court, as seen in Sanda's case, highlights how language is not only a means of communication but also an active tool used to shape legal outcomes (Olsson, 2008). The linguistic choices made by defendants are often carefully crafted, either consciously or subconsciously, to align with legal advice or personal defence strategies. Forensic discourse analysis allows researchers to explore the subtleties in word choice, sentence structure, and the framing of events by defendants, which may reveal attempts to justify actions or shift blame (Heydon, 2005). Forensic Discourse analyses how language is utilised to elicit sympathy, establish credibility, or subtly challenge accusations. Studies show that defendants addressing accusations may deploy certain rhetorical strategies that signal denial, evasion, or admission, thereby shaping the narrative for both the court and the public (Ehrlich, 2014). This approach underlines the importance of examining discourse as a social practice that reflects power dynamics, especially in cases where public interest is heightened.

Further, forensic discourse explores how external factors, such as cultural norms and societal expectations, influence the speech patterns of individuals in court (Solan & Tiersma, 2005). Such cultural lenses can affect the interpretation of language by the jury, the judge, and the broader public (Cotterill, 2003). Therefore, the study of discourse focuses on how cultural and linguistic elements intersect in legal discourse, providing insights into broader socio-legal themes.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Nigeria, there appears to be limited attention towards a significant forensic field of study, especially in the direction of the strategies used by the accused in getting themselves out of intricate legal matters and implicating others in more complicated situations. This phenomenon is an interesting language use activity deserving of conscious intellectual attention to establish the need to engage the services of linguists where such matters deadlock. Considering the scholarships reviewed in the empirical studies section of this paper, especially in Nigeria, most early contributions were geared towards providing insights into the field (FL)- examples are: Shuy (1984), John Olsson (2004), Mohsen Ghasemi Ariani (2014), Mel Greenlee 2012, Yuan Chuanyou (2013), Kadiri Rosma 2020, Sanni Oluwale Oluwatobi, Farinde Raifu Olanrewaju (2016), etcetera. What is obvious from the studies is that scholars have made frantic efforts to apply the principles and elements of forensic linguistics in combination with some linguistic tools, such as Discourse, CDA, Pragmatics, Stylistics, etc., to their study to proffer a solution to some social problems, at least linguistically. The most

important parts of this research that have attracted the interest of our study are those from Nigerian linguists. So far, in Nigeria, to the best of our knowledge, there are not many studies focused on *live murder* cases, especially in finding discourse strategies deployed by accused persons in removing oneself from a complex legal jam like murder. Therefore, there is a need for Nigerian linguists to join their counterparts in other fields of study, especially law, to find linguistic solutions to some encumbering social issues. This study, therefore, believes that interrogating the discourse strategies used by accused persons while answering questions in court will add value to existing literature in FL in Nigeria. The paper applies the Forensic Discourse Approach to interrogate the discourse strategies deployed by an accused person named Maryam Sanda in an attempt to get herself out of a legal jam in a criminal suit judgment delivered at the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja on Monday 27<sup>th</sup>, January, 2020. Maryam was condemned to death for killing her husband.

### **Research Questions**

- i. In what way(s) can discourse-linguistic tools be applied to interrogate the discourse strategies in the responses of Maryam Sanda during cross-examination and re-examination in court?
- ii. How can framing and stance-taking, which are concepts in Media Discourse, be deployed as essential tools for effective analysis in Forensic Discourse?

### **Objectives**

- i. I. To apply discourse-linguistic tools to interrogate the discourse strategies in the responses of Maryam Sanda during cross-examination and re-examination in court.
- ii. To deploy Framing and Stance-Taking as essential tools for effective analysis in Forensic Discourse

### **Methodology**

The study is a Qualitative Content Analysis based on Teun van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (2001). Dijk's SCM provides insights into the responsibility of a critical discourse analyst. He asserts that the main point of critical discourse analysis is to show how various ideologies are expressed in various kinds of structures. The choice of the model helps to unravel the discourse's ideological strategies used by the accused to emphasise her goodness by de-emphasising the bad of her victim.

The paper heavily relies on secondary data, which comprises the 112-page document of judgment delivered by Justice Y. Halilu on the 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 and collected from the

library of the Federal High Court, Jabi, Abuja. The purposive sampling method was deployed to select the parts of documents that can help to drive the analysis. Data were analysed using the above-mentioned theory with particular focus on the various discourse linguistic resources deployed by the accused during the examinations.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Teun van Dijk's Social Cognitive Model (2001)**

van Dijk's Social Cognitive (2001), also known as the Ideological Square Model, is adopted as the theoretical framework and analytic tool for the study because it provides insights into the responsibility of a Critical Discourse Analyst. van Dijk's SCM (2001) analyses how discourse constructs and reinforces ideologies by emphasising positive representations of in-groups and negative portrayals of out-groups. This model is suitable for this study as it helps uncover how Maryam Sanda's discourse strategies were deployed to frame her narrative to mitigate culpability, construct innocence, or shift blame. The framework provides some illustrations of the categories that he believes to be important in doing CDA studies. He asserts that the main point of the analysis is to show how various ideologies are expressed in various kinds of structures. To van Dijk, a discourse analyst must *read the mind* and find the *intention* of participants in any discourse event. Examining ideological biases or ideologies in discourse is important to the socio-cognitive approach. van Dijk (2001) further maintains that ideologies are "the basic social representations of social groups' that serve as the foundation for a group's beliefs and behaviour. Knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, norms and values are all part of social cognitions".

According to Bamgbose and Alugbin (2023), "the ideological square is a key strategy in van Dijk's approach to CDA. They corroborate that the concept is premised on positive-self description of those considered the in-group and negative-self description of others considered to be the out-group". In this work, however, the study has deployed van Dijk's Ideological Square to examine Maryam Sanda's case, emphasising the positive action of the in-group (ie, the accused) and the negative action of the out-group (ie, the deceased husband). They also de-emphasise the negative actions of the in-group and the positive actions of the out-group. The diagram below represents these strategies:

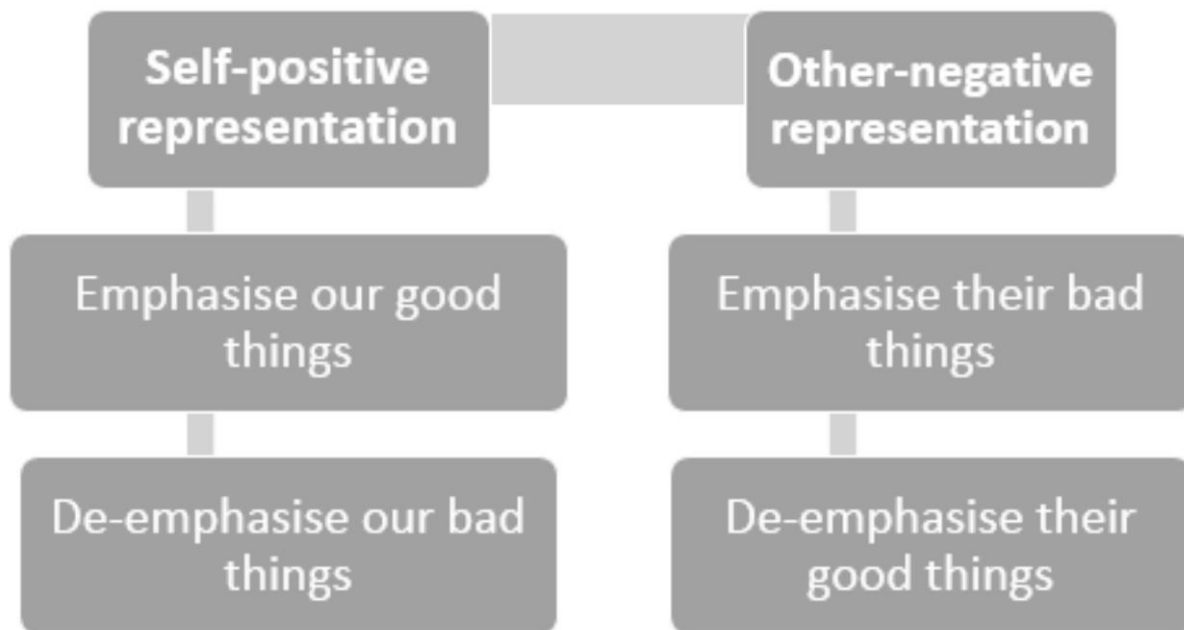


Figure 1: Teun van Dijk Ideological Square 2001

### Empirical Review

John Olsson (2004) describes Forensic Linguistics as the interface between linguistics (the science of language) and the law, including law enforcement. He also outlines the history and development of Forensic Linguistics from its beginnings in the 1950s and 1960s to the present day, including the Forensic Phonetics content. The article points up how Forensic Linguistics works in the justice system and some of the difficulties that linguists and lawyers may have in understanding each other's viewpoints. The article raises a concern by suggesting that lawyers and linguists work more closely with each other in the interests of justice, and that linguists seek to widen their understanding of international law, of international human rights issues, and of how law and language relate to each other across the globe. It suggests that the future of Forensic Linguistics will be bright if linguists work on these issues, and also on acquiring skills, knowledge and qualifications in other disciplines to better prepare them for working in and with courts. This study, no doubt, incites, motivates and challenges further study, hence, the need for this current paper.

In his contribution to FL in 2012, Mel Greenlee in *I object, or did I* examine the language of trial objections in a small set of California cases. The study briefly discusses the three audiences' views of trial objections, focusing particularly on the appellate court. It provides case examples of the adjudication of trial objections from California criminal appeals where, in his view, the appellate court has elevated 'form over substance' in its review of the objection and its pragmatic effect. He found that even in capital appeals, interpretation may be counter

to normal understanding of language, resulting in overly broad forfeiture of grounds for appeal. The influence of Greenlee's study on this work cannot be overemphasised. She was interested in the language of trial objections, while we are interested in the language of defence by the accused person (Maryam Sanda) in a criminal case. The influence her study has over this one is that since she could do a study of a court trial in Europe, similar research can be replicated in Nigeria.

In 2012, Janet Ainsworth (2012) studied the construction of admissions of fault through American rules of evidence: speech, silence, and significance in the legal creation of liability. The rules of evidence in law both govern the admissibility of evidence in trials and determine the scope of meaning to be accorded to it. According to her, an examination of two common law evidentiary rules reveals that such rules incorporate normative and ideological assumptions about language usage. The adoptive admissions rule provides that, when a person is confronted with an accusation of wrongdoing without expressly denying it, the allegation is presumed to be true. The evidence rule construing apology as an admission of fault presumes that apologetic language means 'I'm sorry I did something wrong' rather than 'I'm sorry that something bad has happened to you.' Evidence rules such as these operate as ideological "gates" to channel and constrain the legal interpretation of language used by juridical actors, and additionally serve as one of the means through which the linguistic ideology in law is exercised to create and maintain social hierarchies.

Ainsworth's study was concerned with admission of fault through American rules of evidence, but this paper is dovetailing into determining the discourse strategies used by an accused to evade guilt in a murder case.

Yuan Chuanyou (2013), on his part, published a paper titled *Appreciate others' beauty as well as one's own: a contrastive multimodal discourse analysis of two courtroom trials*. The paper makes a multimodal and contrastive analysis of a Chinese courtroom extract and an American counterpart. It studied the courtroom discourses from multiple visual and verbal modes, focusing on participants' gestures and movements as well as their speech. The analysis is based on systemic-functional linguistics, including the metafunctions and appraisal theory. It presents a contrastive study of two similar criminal trials, one an American murder case, referred to as the Harvard graduate murder case, and the other a Chinese intentional homicide case, referred to as the Ma Jiajue homicide case. Both cases involve the killings of university students. In the American case, Alexander Pring Wilson, a graduate student from Harvard University, was tried for killing a stranger with a knife in a street fight. He was accused of first-degree murder, but claimed self-defence. He was convicted of voluntary manslaughter

and sentenced to 6—8 years in prison. In the Chinese case, Ma Jiajue, a senior undergraduate student from Yunnan University, was tried for killing four classmates over a quarrel arising out of a card game. He was charged with intentional homicide, and was convicted and sentenced to death.

Yuan's study is one of the major influences on the current work. He studied the courtroom discourses from multiple visual and verbal modes, focusing on participants' gestures and movements as well as their speech; our paper interrogates the speech of an accused in a murder trial with keen interest in her defence narratives aimed at exonerating herself of any guilt and implicating her victim. Yuan's analysis is based on systemic-functional linguistics, including the metafunctions and Appraisal theory, while ours is based on Teun van Dijk's (2001) Model. The current study is simply an extension of what Yuan did in China to Nigeria to demonstrate that linguists can be interested in anything in society.

Mohsen Ghasemi Ariani (2014) scrutinised a framework and brief overview of the key elements of forensic linguistics, covering the discipline, the history and development of it, and the use of linguistic evidence in legal proceedings. The typical types of linguistic evidence, such as author identification, forensic stylistics, discourse analysis, forensic phonetics, forensic transcription and variation (intra-author and inter-author), are explored. He also introduced a section on document examination, software forensics, semiotics and plagiarism detection in the paper. Besides, the study pays attention to some forensic applications of descriptive linguistics, such as forensic linguistics, text types, author, and the linguistic investigation of authorship. He concludes by suggesting that lawyers and linguists should work more closely with each other in the interests of justice and that not only should linguists improve their understanding of law issues but also lawyers should benefit from the hindsight experiences of linguists as consultants and expert witnesses. Ariani's work gave necessary and complementary insights and motivations to the current work. It provides a good foundation for forensic linguistics and helps the analyst to understand their responsibility (ies).

In Nigeria, Sanni Oluwole Oluwatobi studied *The Role of Forensic Linguists in Courtroom Cross-Examinations* (2018). The research examined the legal process of courtroom cross-examination, which is believed by the literature to be hostile and uncooperative since it is usually face-threatening. The study findings reveal that some indices, like age, social status, educational qualifications, etc., are criteria that determine politeness in the Nigerian courtroom cross-examinations and conclude that forensic linguists need to be actively involved in courtroom discourse to ensure that judgments are not only dispensed but that

justice is also carried out. Considering Sanni's conclusion that forensic linguists need to be actively involved in courtroom discourse, this study believes that interrogating the discourse strategies used by accused persons while answering questions in court will add value to existing literature in FL in Nigeria.

Kadiri Rosma (2020) describes the application of legal language using a forensic linguistics approach through discourse analysis, text, speech act, meaning, and language style. His research applies a qualitative method and was conducted in the state courts of Gorontalo. Data were collected from verdicts of the state court of Gorontalo. Kadiri selected these data using the literature review technique. He then analysed based on the substance of the problem. Data analyses were conducted in several steps. Verdicts were analysed using 1) discourse form, 2) language style, and 3) speech acts. His study was used to help law enforcement officials solve legal problems from a language use point of view. This is due to the unresolved issues of legal language. He concluded that linguists have the intellectual capacity to help society find truths and justice by examining language content through comprehensive legal evidence. This conclusion serves as a motivating factor for this study. Since Kadiri's research was used to assist law enforcement officials in solving legal problems from a language use point of view, there is no doubt that our paper shall replicate similar results.

Also, in 2020, Farinde Raifu Olanrewaju et al did a study titled *Interpreting and Markers in Nigerian Courtroom Discourse*. The study investigated power management strategies in Nigerian courtroom discourse, focusing on the asymmetrical distribution of power between the courtroom officials, such as Judges and lawyers on one hand, and the defendants and the witnesses on the other. This was aimed at bringing about a positive change in the Nigerian courtroom discourse in line with the Nigerian government's change agenda. They adopted a new approach to the study of courtroom discourse in Nigeria, with the application of Discourse Markers proposed by Deborah Schiffrin (1987) and Sandra Hale (1999) and courtroom interpreting proposed by Berk-Seligson (1990; 1997). The paper ranges question types according to their degree of control and found that those with a high degree of control lost their power and control through the process of interpreting. It also found that since lawyers always maintain power and control through the type of questions they ask (such as declarative, yes/no, alternative questions), they are at a losing end whenever there is a need for a court interpreter. Similarly, the use of discourse markers in the court (such as now, so, and, ok) also signifies the lawyer's power and control over the witnesses and defendants, and these are always used to further enhance the power, coercion and challenging nature of the lawyers. However, while Farinde *et al.* in their research dabbled into investigating power management

strategies in Nigerian courtroom discourse, our study is interrogating the use of language by accused persons in a criminal matter to evade punishment, to complement and advance the frontiers of knowledge in FL in Nigeria. Considering the above reviewed scholarships to this study, most early contributions were geared towards providing insights into the field (FL)-examples are: Shuy (1984), John Olsson (2004), Mohsen Ghasemi Ariani (2014), Mel Greenlee 2012, Yuan Chuanyou (2013), Kadiri Rosma 2020, Sanni Oluwole Oluwatobi, Farinde Raifu Olanrewaju (2016), etcetera. What is obvious from the studies is that scholars have made frantic efforts to apply the principles and elements of forensic linguistics in combination with some linguistic tools such as Discourse, CDA, Pragmatics, Stylistics, etc., to their study with a view to proffering solutions to some social problems, at least linguistically. The identified research gaps in the review highlight the limited attention given to discourse strategies of accused persons in live murder cases within forensic linguistics, particularly in Nigeria. While previous studies have explored courtroom discourse, forensic linguistics applications, trial objections, and power dynamics, they have largely overlooked the linguistic strategies accused individuals use to navigate legal proceedings and mitigate culpability. This study seeks to fill that gap by analysing the courtroom discourse of Maryam Sanda, providing insights into how defendants employ language to construct narratives of innocence or shift blame. By focusing on discourse strategies in a high-profile Nigerian murder trial, this research expands forensic linguistic scholarship in Nigeria and underscores the relevance of linguistic analysis in legal contexts.

## **Result**

### **van Dijk's Ideological Square Strategy in Maryam's Responses to Questions during the Proceedings.**

#### **Deployment of Verbal Constructions as Discourse Strategies**

In some instances, Maryam creatively deploys **Transitive Verbs (V+NP) and Transitive Locative Verbs (V+NP+PP)** as Discourse Strategy for Self-Positive Representation. Transitive verbs (TVs) are verbs that are accompanied by direct or indirect objects, while Transitive Locative Verbs (TLVs) are accompanied by NP and followed by PP. Examples from the data include:

**Text One:** ...My *husband came back home* and

I **Went downstairs** to *welcome him* and I **met him** with his friend (Ibrahim).

*We chatted together and I reminded him that I wanted to go for a wedding and wanted to make a call because I didn't have credit on my phone, my husband gave me his phone...*

**Text Two...woke up and took my bath,**

*fed my daughter,*

*went upstairs with my cousin,*

*came back to the living room,*

*came back home,*

*Went downstairs to welcome him,*

*met him with his friend (Ibrahim)....,*

*chatted together...*

From the above text, we may deduce that she deliberately used those verbal constructions to maintain a positive representation of herself as not just a good wife but mother to their daughter (as she kept mentioning her daughter repeatedly). She also kept referring to the deceased as my husband during her response, perhaps to arouse the judge's sympathy that she loves him even in death (emphasis on her good personality). This could also be interpreted as another ploy to maintain a good reputation before the court.

On the other hand, her responses show a negative representation as another discourse strategy deployed to demonise the deceased. Again, the accused uses some other verbal constructions like the ones identified below to de-emphasise the good personality of her husband in the following expressions:

**Text three...saw nude girls' picture..., was a message above the picture, suggested that it was my husband that requested for the picture... cried for a while, rushed downstairs to call my husband, could talk about it..., came upstairs with me..., started talking and became an argument..., asked him to divorce me, cango back home..., called my cousin (Sadiya) to call his friend (Ibrahim), was downstairs to come over and interfere...became very angry, did not want a third party..., wanted to leave the room, blocked him , can talk about it..., pushed me, went to the kitchen..., held my neck, chucked before his hand was removed, met my husband in the kitchen, started yelling at me, ignored him, kept yelling at me..., left the kitchen, went to the living room to get my charger, wanted to leave, was angry, should**

*not walk out on him. dragged me from behind... etcetera.* The above highlighted excerpts imply that she was never responsible for the negative outcome of the fight between them that night. It is clear from the data that she persists in maintaining good conduct throughout the night. However, her response shows that it is the husband who is the violent one. This is simply what van Dijk refers to as self-positive representation; emphasis on the good conduct or behaviours of the in-group by de-emphasising their bad personality. And, others negative-representation with emphasis on their bad personality while de-emphasising their good conduct.

### **Blame-Frame and Victimisation as Discourse Strategy**

To Osinsanwo (2020), blame-frame strategies include: blame-frame as a propaganda tactic, finger-pointing and demonisation strategy, buck passing and social control technique. The study observed elements of blame-frame in the language of the accused; thus, there is a need to unearth this phenomenon. Although blame-frame, like ‘stance taking’, is a media discourse strategy, the study has deployed both concepts to be instrumental to an effective discourse strategy in criminal proceedings. We may infer that the accused person deliberately deploys some linguistic constructions to not only protect her personality as a good person but also to victimise the deceased. This, no doubt, points to what Osinsanwo (2020) refers to as buck-passing, finger-pointing and demonisation strategies. For example, Maryam used some declarative constructions and complex sentences such as:

**Text four...** *I wanted to leave, he pushed me and as I was falling, I mistakenly pushed sisha bottle.. the sisha bottle broke, spill off my husband pinned me to the ground and I bit him.., He also bit me in retaliation, I could hear our daughter crying and I asked him to allow, I struggled to my feet, when he loosened up...*

**Text five...** *I was walking away, he wanted to hold me again and he fell. He was calling me to come and help him and I thought he was pretending, when I went upstairs, he was calling me and...*

**Text six...** *I asked my Cousin (Sadiya) to go downstairs to see, she rushed back up to say that she saw him holding his chest...* to deliberately demonize the deceased as not just the victim of his own violence but the harbinger of his own death.

### Stance-Taking as Discourse Strategy

According to Biber (2000), stance refers to “lexical and grammatical expression of attitude, feeling or judgments or commitment concerning the proportional content of the message”. In other words, stance refers to the position people take about themselves, to what is said, and to other people or objects.

Like framing, stance is a concept in media discourse that has been integrated into forensic discourse in this paper because of the value it adds to unearthing the underlying discourse strategies the accused may deploy to exonerate self from any legal encumbrances. There is no doubt that Maryam’s responses throughout the cross-examination and re-examination proceedings in court can be assumed to be stance-taking. Maryam deliberately chooses her words strategically to escape any kind of legal implication, as observed in the following excerpts:

**Text seven...** *I left the kitchen and went to the living room to get my charger. I plugged my charger and wanted to leave but my husband was angry and that I should not walk out on him. He dragged me from behind. I wanted to leave, he now pushed me and as I was falling, I mistakenly pushed sisha bottle.*

**Text eight...** *The sisha bottle broke and the water inside spill off my husband pinned me to the ground and I bit him.*

**Text nine:** *He also bit me in retaliation I could hear our daughter crying and I asked him to allow me so I attend to our daughter. I struggled to my feet when he loosened up... I was walking way, he wanted to hold me again and he fell. He was calling me to come and help him and I thought he was pretending, when I went upstairs, he was calling me and...* This study can posit that the above excerpts have further solidified the study’s claim that Maryam deliberately and strategically deployed these grammatical constructs as further evidence of **Self-Positive Representation** (emphasising her good personality) and **Others-Negative Representation of her husband.**

In addition, she denies everything from the eyewitness submission- Ibrahim, who was the first prosecuting witness and her husband’s friend, whom Maryam had confirmed was around when the incident occurred, except during the death of the deceased. She also denies being

responsible for the death of her husband; rather, she tried to blame the deceased for wanting to kill her when he choked her with the broken shisha bottle on the floor, as in this excerpt:

**Text ten... *I mistakenly pushed sisha bottle.. the sisha bottle broke and the water inside spill off my husband pinned me to the ground and I bit him...***She also denies that as at the time of leaving the room, there was no blood; she tries to feign ignorance of witnessing her husband's death. This is against the police witness submission. The policeman who is also the first security personnel at the scene, claimed, in his submission, that the blood stain had already been cleaned as at the time of reaching the residence. In short, she tried to maintain a positive stance throughout by denying every topic that could incriminate her.

The above analysis of Maryam Sanda's responses reveals key discourse strategies that align with van Dijk's Ideological Square Model, including *self-positive representation* and *others-negative representation*. Through carefully structured verbal constructions, she portrays herself as a loving wife and mother while subtly demonising the deceased by emphasising his alleged aggression. Additionally, she employs *blame-framing* and *stance-taking* to shift responsibility, strategically denying incriminating evidence and portraying the incident as an unfortunate consequence of her husband's actions rather than her own. These findings contribute to forensic linguistics by demonstrating how accused persons use linguistic strategies to construct narratives that mitigate guilt, influence courtroom perceptions, and navigate legal proceedings.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, drawing inference from the analysis of Maryam's responses to examination questions in court and the findings has shown that accused persons have at their disposal infinite discourse strategies to deploy to exonerate themselves from any legal jam and, in turn, demonise their victims. The study may conclude that Nigerian linguists can explore other untapped areas of forensic linguistics that concern intricate legal matters such as this. This will, in turn, give them the most anticipated recognition as social problem solvers, not just social critics.

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