

Legitimation and Coercion in Ghana's Electoral Discourse: A Critical Analysis of the Electoral Commission's Press Conference

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Abstract

Emerging democracies and post-conflict nations are now stabilizing and democratizing as a result of elections. This study delves into power dynamics within media discourse, focusing on the press conference held by the Ghana Electoral Commission concerning the acquisition of a new biometric voter management system. Drawing from Chilton's (2004) framework of coercion, legitimisation, and delegitimation, it investigates how the conference escalated political tensions by reiterating the Commission's decision, rebutting opposition claims, and emphasizing the legitimacy of the new system. Using qualitative content analysis, the study offers a nuanced examination of language usage, highlighting inclusion and distancing techniques, along with ideological underpinnings, employed by the Commission to justify the procurement. Notably, descriptive terms like "expired," "bloated," and "out-of-life" are utilized to characterise the current voter register, aiming to underscore the necessity of the proposed changes.

INTRODUCTION

Recent advancements in media communication have significantly influenced the analysis of political discourse, where politics is viewed as both text and speech (Casero-Ripollés, 2020; Chilton & Schaffner, 2002). Language serves as a primary tool in political interactions, enabling actors to construct ideological narratives and justify decisions. Chilton (2004) introduces the concept of "legitimation," arguing that political actors often frame their actions through moral oppositions, such as good versus evil or just versus unjust, to garner public support. Taiwo (2008) highlights language's role in translating political will into concrete social action, while Schaffner (1996) reinforces the idea that political activity is inseparable from language. Van Dijk (1998) further expands on this by identifying various political discourse genres—such as propaganda, political speeches, and interviews—as key instruments in shaping public perception and policy.

Elections in emerging democracies and post-conflict nations have become central to democratization and stability, yet they remain susceptible to volatility and renewed conflict (Kühne, 2010; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2020; Kumah-Abiwu & Darkwa, 2020). The success of electoral processes hinges on factors like independent electoral commissions, robust complaints mechanisms, appropriate electoral systems, and timing. Despite widespread international advocacy for democratic ideals, implementation often falls short, particularly in the Global South. Kühne (2010) cautions against repeating the mistakes of flawed electoral processes, as seen in Afghanistan's 2009 presidential election, emphasizing the need for credible and transparent systems that earn the public's trust.

This study critically analyses a press conference report delivered by the Deputy Electoral Commissioner of Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC), which announced plans to adopt a new Biometric Voter Management System and compile a new Voters Register ahead of the 2020 general elections. Drawing on Chilton's (2004) model of coercion, legitimisation, and delegitimation, the study explores how the EC used language to justify its decision and respond to opposition claims. Strategic terms such as "expired," "bloated," and "out-of-life" were employed to delegitimise the existing register and legitimise the new system. This linguistic framing reflects broader attempts to build societal consensus and secure public trust. By linking the EC's discourse to socio-political contexts and public justification frameworks (D'Agostino, 2007; Lavrusheva, 2013), the study demonstrates how language is used not only to inform but to influence and solidify authority in democratic governance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

In political linguistics, legitimisation is the discursive process through which political actors justify their authority and seek compliance. Cap (2008), drawing on Habermas's (1981) concept of rationality, defines legitimisation as the speaker's assertion of entitlement to compliance. He identifies rhetorical strategies such as appealing to audience desires, reinforcing ideology, demonstrating leadership, and referencing accomplishments—tactics rooted in Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive face theory. Legitimation is inherently dyadic, often accompanied by delegitimation, where opponents are undermined through negative portrayal, scapegoating, or exclusion.

Cap (2008) also highlights mechanisms such as assertion, the assertion-directive framework, and politics of implicature, emphasizing how political speakers embed ideological content that aligns with the audience's values. His concept of common ground—shared beliefs and assumptions—forms a persuasive base for introducing new ideas. This aligns with the notion of the latitude of acceptance, where messages are more likely to be accepted if they align with pre-existing beliefs (Noelle-Neumann, 1991; Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). Common ground strategies, grounded in politeness and face-management theories (Fraser, 1990; Culpeper, 1996), enhance the persuasive power of political discourse.

Chilton (2004), building on earlier work with Schäffner (1997), identifies three main strategic functions in political discourse: coercion, legitimisation, and delegitimation. Coercion, unlike legitimisation, relies on the speaker's authority or resources and includes both overt acts (laws, commands) and subtle pressure (requests from high-status individuals). Emotional appeals—like fear or anger—can reinforce coercion by triggering affective responses. Chilton further explains:

1. Validation and Invalidation: Political actors justify compliance through discourse, using ideology, leadership, or achievements. Coercion enhances legitimacy by presenting obedience as rational or necessary.

2. Delegitimation: Opponents are portrayed as outsiders or threats using tactics like blaming, scapegoating, or exclusion. These communicative acts damage the target's moral, rational, or social standing.
3. Representation and Misrepresentation (Excluded): Though Chilton includes these as strategic functions (involving secrecy, denial, or euphemism), this study excludes them. The Electoral Commission's report does not appear to engage in such tactics, focusing instead on transparency and justification. As such, violations of Grice's maxims or Habermas's validity claims are not central to this analysis.

Chilton views legitimisation and delegitimation as existing on a continuum—from positive face construction (insider status) to face-threatening acts (outsider status). These strategies form the basis for discourse control and the shaping of political narratives. The study adopts Chilton's (2004) model, focusing on coercion, legitimisation, and delegitimation as the analytical framework. The functions of representation and misrepresentation are excluded, given the report's transparency and lack of discursive manipulation. By concentrating on these three functions, the study investigates how political authority is asserted, justified, and challenged through language in the Electoral Commission's discourse.

Empirical Review

The studies by Cap (2008), Taiwo (2008), Lavrusheva (2013), Iețcu-Fairclough (2008), and Windsor & Bowman (2019) collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of political discourse and legitimation strategies across different contexts. Cap (2008) proposes a cross-disciplinary model for political discourse analysis, emphasizing the importance of analyzing concepts from adjacent fields and maintaining dialogue between linguistic data and broader social or psychological frameworks. His work provides a methodological foundation for analyzing political discourse by incorporating both linguistic and non-linguistic perspectives in the legitimisation of political actions.

Similarly, Taiwo (2008) examines a speech by former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, revealing the power dynamics embedded in political discourse. He identifies strategies of legitimisation and coercion, offering insight into the rhetorical complexity of Nigerian political communication.

Building on the theme of institutional discourse, Lavrusheva (2013) explores the media's role in legitimating policy changes, particularly in the context of UK retail planning policy from 1980 to 2000. Her study reveals interconnected strategies such as authorization, rationalization, narrativization, and moralization in the media's legitimating efforts.

In contrast, Iețcu-Fairclough (2008) takes a more theoretical approach by integrating sociological, pragmatic, and dialectical perspectives. Using Bourdieu's framework, she analyses the tactical manoeuvring in Romanian President Traian Băsescu's post-removal speech to reveal deeper legitimation strategies in times of political crisis.

Finally, Windsor and Bowman (2019) focus on electoral rhetoric, examining how grammar and semantics in campaign language influenced voter perceptions during the 2016 American presidential election. They argue that neglecting the rhetorical dimensions of political language can lead to flawed interpretations and inaccurate election predictions.

Taken together, these studies offer a comprehensive view of how political actors use language to assert authority, construct legitimacy, and influence public perception across diverse political and cultural settings. By synthesizing insights from each study, a shared emphasis emerges on how discourse functions as a vehicle for power negotiation and legitimation. Collectively, they provide a strong theoretical and methodological foundation for investigating language use in public, sociocultural, political, and media contexts.

METHOD

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative design to thoroughly explore, interpret, and understand social phenomena within authentic settings. Specifically, we employed a qualitative content analysis (Jujugenia, Kyei, & Nanglakong, 2021) to systematically explore and interpret the language used in the Electoral Commission's press conference report. Qualitative content analysis allows for an in-depth examination of textual data by identifying patterns, themes, and strategic functions within the discourse (Kyei & Afful, 2021a, 2021b; Duut & Kyei, 2021).

Data Source

The study utilised data from a press conference held by the Electoral Commission, as reported in a Graphic Online article by Isaac Yeboah on December 31, 2019. The press conference announced the Commission's decision to acquire a new Biometric Voter Management System and establish a new Voters Register for the 2020 general elections. The Commission justified this decision based on consultations with its IT team and external advisors, who recommended acquiring a new system instead of refurbishing the existing one for economic and operational benefits. The Deputy Chairman in charge of Operations, Mr. Samuel Tettey, emphasized the advantages of purchasing a new system over the costly refurbishment of the old one during the press conference at the headquarters in Accra. Mr. Tettey highlighted that the current Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) systems were at the end of their life cycle, lacking available parts for repairs, including laptops. He emphasised the necessity for a new biometric voter registration for the 2020 elections due to the bloated nature of the current register, with no effective method for cleaning it. This bloated list increases election costs, generates unnecessary waste, and compromises the integrity of the election. Mr. Tettey assured that the new registration system would incorporate facial recognition, eliminating manual verification and ensuring reliability. He addressed concerns about time constraints, asserting that creating a fresh voter list was essential and not a waste of limited resources. To uncover common reader/listener engagement patterns in this report and to analyse its strategic functional legitimisation of the press conference, we applied Chilton's (2004) framework on the strategic function of language. This approach aimed to identify prevalent interactional features within the report, shedding light on how the Electoral Commission strategically justified its actions to the public.

Data collection

To ensure data alignment with the research objectives, a purposive sampling method was employed (Creswell, 2003). The press conference and editorial from the Graphic Online electronic newspapers were obtained from the internet. Due to the research objectives, a single newspaper was chosen as the dataset, as all media outlets presented identical information from the press conference.

Data analysis procedure

Manual Coding

The dataset was manually coded to identify discursive signals of strategic functions—coercion, legitimisation, and delegitimation—as described in Chilton's (2004) model. Each linguistic instance was interpreted based on its function in context. Coding was informed by earlier studies in political discourse (e.g., Windsor & Bowman, 2019; Iețcu-Fairclough, 2008; Lavrusheva, 2013), ensuring comparability and consistency. Only reports published on the day of the press conference were analysed to avoid the influence of subsequent editorial shifts.

Inter-Rater Reliability

To enhance objectivity, an inter-rater evaluation was conducted. Given the study's focus on the interpretive nature of language and ideology, subjectivity was an expected limitation (Adel, 2006). However, raters were chosen based on relevant expertise, and an 80% inter-rater agreement was achieved, ensuring reliable identification of Chilton's strategic functions. Cross-checking of data between the primary researcher and the rater minimized personal bias, following Creswell's (2003) recommendations for reflexivity in qualitative research.

Analytical Framework

This analysis was guided by Chilton's (2004) framework of strategic language functions—coercion, legitimisation, and delegitimation—which help uncover how institutional actors use language to justify, impose, or resist political actions. Notably, the framework treats these functions as context-dependent, meaning that a linguistic form may serve different strategic purposes depending on situational factors. For this study, representation and misrepresentation were excluded from analysis, as the Electoral Commission's discourse aimed to inform rather than obscure, aligning with transparency rather than secrecy or distortion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study's findings are reported in this section. As was already mentioned, the Electoral Commission of Ghana used two of Chilton's (2004) for their anticipated actions to acquire a new Biometric Voter Management System and compile a new Voters Register for the 2020 general elections, they plan to use three strategic functions—coercion, legitimisation, and its opposite, deligitimization—to project or achieve credibility and, ultimately, legitimisation in the media. Each strategy is thoroughly detailed, along with the steps involved in putting each of the many strategic functions to use.

Coercion

Identifying coercive methods, according to Chilton (2004), strongly depends on interpretation. The use of rhetorical devices intended to convince may lead some to label an entire oration as "coercive." This does not, however, preclude highlighting specific passages of speech that appear to have been chosen deliberately with coercion in mind.

He claimed that two distinct forms of coercion, one driving emotional responses and the other pushing cognitive ones, could be separated in the study. By considering speech acts and more specifically, the perlocutionary effects of speech acts, Austin (1962) argued that we might conclude that the first form of language use is coercive. As a result, one potential effect of some of EC's assertions could be the arousal of fear by making predictions about causal effects that are based on fact, such as saying that an unchecked Vendor lock-in will cause bad things to happen to the country like it happened in Kenya.

Example 1: It would be really silly on our part to keep using a solution that we have no control over. This is dangerous for the country and is similar to mortgaging our sovereignty to a vendor. The most recent elections in Kenya are an illustration of this; the solution's developer departed the nation after the results were revealed and locked up the data. Violence followed, and it happened again.

When it comes to speech actions, the EC issues warnings; when it comes to contextualised political language use, they are employing a coercive tactic in that they (perhaps) sow seeds of dread among actors and contingent occurrences. Consequently, spreading anxiety among the populace and the nation as a whole and foreseeing terrible outcomes in the event that the country continues to implement a solution that is outside of our control. Consequently, we must consider that action to be

equivalent to mortgaging our sovereignty to a vendor. This identical circumstance is what Chilton refers to as "emotive coercion," which he claims can happen when specific words or ideas gain mental representations that are somehow connected (neurologically, in reality) to the limbic system's emotion centres. He provided instances of how terms like "urgency," "national danger," and "evil," which appear seldom throughout the report, may cause readers to feel fear. As shown by the EC in the study, Chilton (2004) asserts that these emotions may be related to the protection of the family, defense of the group, defense of territory, defense against aggression, and defense against loss of control.

Chilton (2004) also discusses less obvious forms of coerced behaviour, which he claims include speech roles that people find difficult to avoid or may not even be conscious of, such as responding impulsively to inquiries and requests, etc., especially if the inquirers and requestors are perceived as having more authority or status. He described political actors as frequently using language to coerce others, in addition to setting agendas, selecting conversational topics, placing oneself and others in specific relationships, and making assumptions about realities that readers are required to accept for at least a brief period of time in order to process the text or speech. In this case;

Example 2: As we have again seen in the public sphere, the Commission's plan to compile a new voter register ahead of the 2020 general elections is allegedly in violation of an ECOWAS Protocol that prohibits Election Management Bodies (EMBs) from compiling a new voter register during an election year. That is untrue. The Protocol, on the other hand, says that electoral laws cannot be changed six months before elections. It won't be necessary to change the law in order for the Commission to create a new voter list. Even if it does, the modification will undoubtedly be completed before the general election in six months.

To justify their decision to carry out the new voter registration exercise—asserting that it does not violate ECOWAS Protocols—the Electoral Commission (EC) positions itself in a specific relationship with other relevant bodies, such as ECOWAS. This positioning establishes a framework in which the EC assumes certain realities and expects listeners to accept these assumptions as valid for the time being. In doing so, the EC aligns its actions with the authority and legitimacy of these institutions, reinforcing its justification by invoking shared commitments and protocols. Since the report is seen as a response to queries from major political parties, particularly the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and other civil organizations about territorial and regional violations by the EC's resolve to conduct the registration exercise, this assertion is also an attempt by the EC to set their agenda for the conduct of the registration exercise; *It won't be necessary to change the law in order for the Commission to create a new voter list*. These coercive techniques, as Chilton acknowledged, are less coercive but involve speech roles that people find difficult to avoid or may not even be aware of, such as responding impulsively to inquiries and requests, etc., especially if the inquirers and requestors are perceived as having more authority or status.

In order to understand how EC, use this tactic to justify its activities to the public through the media report, I will now turn my attention to legitimisation as a strategic function.

Legitimation

Cap (2008) asserts that legitimisation can be characterised as a language enactment of the speaker's right to comply (cf. Chilton, 2004), supporting the preceding claim that legitimisation is a political-linguistic term. He borrowed from Habermas's epistemological framework, particularly from his discussion of rationality and "rightness" (Richtigkeit) (cf. Habermas, 1981). This phrase describes the speaker's performance in terms of both the sociopolitical context and the language used. Speech actions are delivered with an implicit claim on the speaker's part that they occupy a certain social or political role and have a specific authority due to their claim of rightness and the legitimisation that follows. The existence of authority justifies a list of justifications for obedience,

which is frequently accompanied by the claim that the audience or an opponent lacks authority. Consider this:

Example 3: The Commission decided to buy a new system rather than refurbish the existing one based on the advice of its IT team and outside consultants. The experts concluded that the cost of purchasing a brand-new system with full service and warranties was comparable to the cost of often repairing defective parts and renewing warranties through third parties. In actuality, the money used to repair parts and renew warranties could have been better spent on a brand-new system that is dependable, state-of-the-art, dependable, user-friendly, and furnished with all features and guarantees.

The credibility of EC's assertions is established by (a) stating actions that are undeniably sensible, legitimate, and anticipated by the addressee, such as "The Commission took the decision based on the advice of its IT team and external Consultants." One of the conclusions that was used in (b) said that "In the opinion of the experts, the cost of frequent replacement of failing parts and the renewal of warranties through third-parties was comparable to the acquisition of a brand-new system with full service and warranties."

According to Cap (2008), methods used to explicitly or implicitly list such reasons include being aware of and/or asserting the addressee's wants and needs, reiterating universally accepted philosophical principles, projecting charismatic leadership, bragging about one's accomplishments, having a positive self-image, and many others. Once more, Cap pointed out that the majority of these typical justifications, which he called "assertions," represent ideological concepts that are consistent with the addressee's psychological, social, political, or religious predispositions. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the seeming anchoring of these techniques is referred to as a positive face that makes the idea of legitimisation as a whole genuinely dyadic and allows the EC to interact with its necessary (counter) element, "delegitimation" (Cap, 2008). According to Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999), the aforementioned legitimation method is known as authorization, and it is stated by referring to the specific authority in question as well as by referencing the authority as a subject. The recommendation of its IT team and outside Consultants was considered by the Commission before making this conclusion.

As can be seen, authorization functions as a type of legitimisation and is typically defined by a negative tone of the messages, a critical stance toward the topic under discussion, and a clear, unarguable source viewpoint.

In order to legitimise the acquisition of the New Biometric Voter Management System and New Voters Register, the EC once more sought to construct what Lavrusheva (2013) referred to as "instrumental rationalization" based on the objectives, justifications, benefits, and results of the procurement. This legitimation strategy highlights the significance of the techniques being used in the sector, their aim, the requirements they are meant to meet, and any possibly advantageous effects (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999; Vaara et al., 2006). Consider this:

Example 4: By utilizing new scanners and software with enhanced fingerprint capture algorithms and verified fingerprint image quality evaluation tools to ensure image quality, the Commission hopes to lower the steadily rising identification failure rate. Registration staff now have access to in-the-moment comments on image quality to enhance capture.

Example 5: The Commission will guarantee a speedy and simple registration process.

Example 6: We are once again replacing the current software with a new one in order to give us the ability to own and control our systems as opposed to the previous scenario where the solution was owned, controlled, and managed by the suppliers.

The aforementioned claims are considered as 'epistemic' legitimisation in that they relate to the speaker's assumption of superior knowledge and understanding of the 'real' facts. This argument, according to Chilton, is related to the idea that the speaker is more "rational," "objective," or even "advanced" in their way of thinking than rivals or opponents. He claims that lists, figures, and other evidence that the speaker presumes the listener would deem trustworthy are frequently utilised to support epistemic arguments (Chilton, 2004). Consider this:

Example 7 It has been claimed that the EC is wasting money by compiling a fresh voter registration list. Additionally, false is this accusation. The cost of the new voter registration in 2012 was GHC 169,730,146.00. GHC 287,559.379 was spent on the 2014/2015 Limited Registration Exercise. A new voter register's compilation is expected to cost GHC 390,265,186.44 in 2020, compared to the 2016 Limited Registration Exercise expense was GHC 487,998,714. Keep in mind that this conversation is regarding the new registration. The above-mentioned costs are related to the price of engaging registration authorities and buying consumable registration supplies. It's crucial to remember that the Commission's current leadership is dedicated to using state funds for electoral activities responsibly.

Example 8: The register is bloated, as everyone knows, and there hasn't been a good way to clean it. Future strategies for doing this are currently being discussed. Additionally, there is no facial recognition function for verification in the current registration. Due to this, manual verification is frequently required when the voter's fingerprints cannot be validated. A current example is the recently concluded DLE, when 34,843 of the 5,431,902 voters were manually vetted. This trend is concerning and shouldn't be supported. For your information, 8,728 of the 205,735 voters in the Upper West Region of the 2019 DLE had their votes manually verified. Another degree of legitimisation, referred to as "deontic," is also discussed by Chilton (2004). In this level, the speaker makes explicit or implicit claims that they are morally as well as cognitively correct. There is a significant overlap between feelings and "factual" representations in this area; if 12 million people participated in the DLE, as was the case for the 2016 General Elections, then more than 72,000 votes would have been manually verified. This number has a big impact on how an election turns out.

The speaker contends that the presenter will endeavor to buttress their argument by relying on morally indisputable convictions. It is noteworthy to recall that the outcome of the 2008 election hinged on a margin of fewer than 40,000 votes. As posited by Chilton (2004), specific emotions evoked prominently encompass fear, anger, a sense of security, protectiveness, and loyalty. These emotions can be aptly characterised as fundamentally primal. To elucidate further, the speaker may presuppose that certain members of the audience harbor historical recollections of a previous provider managing the Biometric Voter Management System, and these recollections are intertwined with apprehension of intrusion and anxiety about subjugation. The protective sentiments are directed towards the preservation of one's sovereignty or nation.

Example 9: The solutions were broken down into three categories: software, hardware, and data center, and the Commission has started a global competitive tender procedure. The Commission made sure that the system's design was based on a uniform and open architecture as a necessary criterion. By doing so, vendor lock-in will be avoided, the Commission will be able to manage its own affairs, and the reliance on suppliers will be reduced by requiring this standard and open systems approach, the Commission wouldn't be limited in the future in terms of human resources and technology for its expanding needs. The Commission would not be

constrained in the future in terms of human resources and technology for its future expansion demands by insisting on this standard and open systems approach.

Chilton (2004) acknowledges that one's physical region and allegiance to individuals with whom affinities can be built or assumed are related to one's sense of security. Underlying this seems to be a fundamental paradigm of self vs other, or what is close to you versus what is far away.

Again, it is simple to identify the legitimizing techniques employed by EC. The establishment of moral authority and a shared moral foundation appears to be the most crucial one since it leaves open the possibility that political opponents lack morality. The speaker makes a strong case for his own superior reason, allowing room for the conclusion that opponents are illogical. The numerous legitimizing techniques that we can interpretatively separate here roughly correspond to Habermas's validity claim of "rightness." The notion that EC is telling the truth is closely related; they make a number of assertions and support them with what appear to be carefully selected tools that give them "credibility." Claiming an authority as the source of an assertion is one technique to make the claim that something is true while also giving oneself greater sociopolitical legitimacy. Use of quasi-conversational and quasi-dispositional patterns, such as question-and-answer pairs, is another tactic that simultaneously evokes rightness and truth by expressing rationality (more epistemic) and reasonableness (more deontic), is another method. The speaker is defending his right to use morality, logic, and veracity to make claims about the rumors being spread about the EC's plans to build a new voters register and purchase a new biometric voter management system for the 2020 general elections. An example would be

Example 10. We would like to clarify certain misconceptions about the Commission's plans to create a new voter's register and acquire a new Biometric Voter Management System (BVMS) in time for the 2020 general elections.

Example 11: The EC is alleged to have never before updated its voter registry during an election year. This claim is wholly untrue. Prior to the general elections in December 2004, the EC created a new voter registration. A new biometric voter registration was created in April to May 2012 in preparation for the December 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. In fact, there is no question about the Commission's ability to create a fresh voter list during an election year.

This is in keeping with the idea that elections are not just a means of democratic participation but also a ferocious struggle for control over resources, leadership positions, and power (Kühne, 2010). I'll now concentrate on delegitimation in the following conversation.

Delegitimation

The EC's complementing tactics for achieving delegitimation include: negative other-presentation, accusing, scapegoating, marginalizing, excluding, assaulting the adversary's moral character, challenging the adversary's rationality, etc. (Cap, 2008). The report from the EC makes the majority of these tactics clear. For instance,

Example 12. A new biometric voter management system has been questioned, according to EC. The answer is, indeed. Since the existing kits and solutions are End-Of-Life (EOL) goods, their original equipment manufacturers (OEM) no longer maintain them. The recent sellers of the solution urged the Commission to upgrade the Data Center in addition to replacing all of the equipment. Our system review consultants, who we hired, attested to this.

Example 13: There is no question that the voter registration list is excessive. We are unable to effectively clean the register, which is the cause of the bloat. The expense of our elections rises as a result of the bloated registration. The number of registered voters is always taken into account when the Commission purchases election supplies.

As there are more registered voters than there are real voters, this results in significant waste.

The EC is seen attempting to project its opponents with a negative-other presentation, arguing that the current kits and solutions are out-of-date, which makes the claims 12 and 13 apparent examples of delegitimisation strategies: They are End-Of-Life (EOL) and their Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) can no longer provide support for them. Thus, in the face of the aforementioned opponents, they attempted to self-legitimise their decision to purchase the new equipment and carry out the registration procedure. This is in light of the fact that elections in developing democracies and post-conflict communities have a significant risk of destabilizing stabilization efforts and undermining democratization. Therefore, they had to defend their choice.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to conduct a critical strategic functional (ideological) analysis of the Ghana Electoral Commission's conference media report regarding its resolve to buy new biometric technology and to carry out a fresh voter registration campaign. The 2020 vital general election was the focus of the report. The Electoral Commission cited this as its justification for spending money on a new Biometric Voter Management System (BVMS) and creating a new voter's register in advance of the 2020 general elections, according to Mr. Tettey (the Deputy Commission). The timing of the study during the nation's preparation for its presidential and legislative elections is crucial because it was a test of whether the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP) would maintain power or hand it over to the National Democratic Congress (NDC), which was the country's strongest opposition. The report was also made public at a time when political unrest in the nation was intensifying amid claims that the EC was beholden to the NPP and would not undertake the exercise, as well as because the opposition (NDC) intended to topple the NPP-led government.

The purpose of the report was to inform Ghanaians, members of civil society, and representatives of international organizations of the value of the EC succeeding in the election by adhering to its legal obligations as a political structural entity. Additionally, it was intended to convey to the opposition that the EC would do every effort to ensure that the 2020 general elections would be held with a new Biometric Voter Management System (BVMS) and a new voter registration list. When providing arguments, EC's word choices seem to illustrate tactics for legitimizing its viewpoint, discrediting its opponents, and pressuring the opposition to accept their idea. The analysis reveals the EC's selection of deontic and epistemic items, which seem to assert the EC, demonstrate its understanding of the electoral process, defend its actions, justify its procurement proposal, and affirm its resolution to conduct voter registration in order to continue with its reforms in order to ensure a free, fair, and credible election in the 2020 general election. It was also noticed that EC used ominous terminology to describe the voters' register and its detractors, such as "bloated" and "misconceptions." The overall reading of the report suggests that it was purposefully written to justify EC's behaviour and its stance and force the opponents to accept it, given the language choices and other contextual elements. Ieţcu-Fairclough (2008) makes the case in favor of their results that legitimacy is frequently evaluated from the standpoint of a particular set of values, beliefs, norms, or aims, as well as from the perspective of a particular truth. It should be highlighted that the report's guiding model presupposes that the Electoral Commission would prioritize legitimisation as a key discourse objective.

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