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Discursive strategies in select mediatised social transformation advocacy in Nigeria

Mohammed Ayodeji Ademilokun *

*Institut Anglistik Amerikanistik, Technische Universität, Chemnitz, Germany
Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria*

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the discursive strategies used in negotiating the social transformation agenda in Nigeria. Data for the study comprise advocacy texts that touch on anti-corruption crusade, entrenchment of democratic values and security of lives and properties. The data were drawn from speeches and jingles circulated by institutional agencies on television and radio stations and covered the period July 2013 to July 2018. The five-year span was informed by the wide gamut of negative realities in the nation at the time frame which led to increased mediatization of social transformation messages in the nation. Fairclough's (2015) dialectical relational approach constitutes the theoretical anchor for the study. Data analysis reveals that the discourse participants deploy framing, legitimation, rhetorical questions, linguistic nativism, metaphorisation of social transformation acts and accentuation of the repercussions of negative actions. The paper concludes that even though the discourse of social transformation in Nigeria is hinged on the desire to impact the society, it also reflects the power disequilibrium in the society which privileges the government and reflects in the construction of Nigeria's problems and its solutions as citizen-oriented.

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1. Introduction

Advocacy is gaining widespread importance in human societies in view of the need to solve many of the human and societal problems. According to Mefalopulos (2008), advocacy as a discourse is concerned with influencing change at policy and public levels and promoting issues relating to social developments. Mckee et al. (2004) also remark that advocacy is the organisation of information into argument through various interpersonal and media channels to gain political and social leadership for a particular development programme. The underlying message in Mefalopulos (2008) and Mckee et al. (2004) is that advocacy engenders developments of all kinds in the society.

Some of the agents of advocacy are the government, non-governmental organisations, international bodies and importantly the youth (see Yuen and Leung, 2010; Marcus and Cunningham, 2016, etc.). Park (2004:79) remarks that advocacy is considered important in international politics and international relations because of its value for facilitating human rights, the environment,

development and reducing poverty in the world. Indeed scholars have examined the relevance of advocacy in different areas – health, gender concerns and policy influence (e.g. Mbizvo et al., 2013; Okonofua et al., 2009; Kingma and Sweetman, 2005). All of these scholars have pointedly remarked that advocacy discourse usually produces positive results.

The growth in advocacy discourse, especially in the developing nations, can be attributed to the potentialities of this communication culture to improve values of good governance, responsive and responsible leadership and virile civic engagement. It is common knowledge that such a discourse can empower citizens by creating awareness of their rights and obligations. Governance thus becomes a mutually beneficial enterprise as it will be viewed as a social contract between the elected officials and the citizens.

Nigeria in particular can be said to be a nation that requires advocacy in view of the many negative realities which are attested to within and outside the nation. The country battles challenges such as Boko haram insurgency, massive financial corruption, kidnapping, political corruption, among others, which have limited the nation's development. Therefore, it is not surprising that there is a growing corpus on advocacy discourse in Nigeria which focuses on different aspects of the national life of the nation that are troubled. The advocacy on social transformation in Nigeria emanates

* Address: Institut Anglistik Amerikanistik, Technische Universität, Chemnitz, Germany.

E-mail address: mohmilokun@oauife.edu.ng

from both government and private circles. Some of the advocacy discourses in the nation emanate from institutional agencies such as the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, among others. In fact, the current government of Nigeria actively reinforced social transformation advocacy in the nation on the 8th of September 2016, when it launched a campaign for national-cum-social transformation tagged “Change Begins with Me”. The attention given the subject of social transformation in Nigeria led to the generation of a compelling discourse on it across media such as newspapers, Twitter, Facebook, radio, television, among others.

However, although advocacy for social change has gained momentum in Nigeria as a result of the relative stable democratic practice (since 1999) and the entrenchment of digital cultures in the nation, very little systematic studies have been done on its status and impact. While scholars (e.g. [Agang, 2014](#); [Ajiwe et al., 2015](#); [Burgess, 2012](#)) have generally studied the discourse from sociological and religious perspectives, focusing on the agency of the humanities, video movies, prayers and the church for national transformation, there is paucity of research on the subject from the linguistic perspective. The few language based studies on social change in Nigeria have focused more on the reconstruction of the Nigerian identity (see [Adegoju, 2016a, 2016b](#)) and the use of social media in deepening political participation (see [Opeibi, 2016](#)). The advocacy texts used in mobilising citizens to embrace rightful thinking and actions in the collective interest of the nation have however been largely neglected. This study therefore focuses on the discursive features of advocacy texts that are used in fostering social transformation in the Nigerian nation. The study adopts a critical discourse approach in order to analyse the nuances of meanings in the advocacy texts with a view to revealing codifications of ideology, identity and power in the texts while identifying the significant linguistic features in the texts as well.

After this introductory background, we present a brief literature and then provide information on the methodology. The theoretical framework for the study follows. The data analysis and discussion are presented afterwards. Finally, the conclusion summarises the findings of the study.

2. Social transformation advocacy in Nigeria: From mass media to new media

Social transformation advocacy is a subject that has enjoyed significant attention in post-independence Nigeria due to the many developmental challenges of the nation that border on moral laxity, indiscipline, among others. By social transformation advocacy, we mean discourses that propose and support certain changes in the behaviour of Nigerians whether in personal capacities or official capacities, as well as influence positive policies and decisions that bear on the lives of the citizens generally.

The discourse of social transformation in Nigeria has received the attention of both government (military and civilian) and non-governmental organisations and individuals. The military governments of Yakubu Gowon, Muhammadu Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha respectively introduced social mobilisation programmes such as Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation, War Against Indiscipline, Mass Mobilisation for Self Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery and National Orientation Agency ([Nwankwo et al., 2012](#)). These social transformation initiatives centred on the various challenges facing the nation at different times such as recovery from civil war, crass indiscipline in public and private lives, social, political, religious and ethnic disintegration, among others. The campaigns were mainly rendered

using the mass media such as television, radio, newspaper and, at times, public rallies.

On the other hand, the non-governmental contributions to social transformation advocacy in Nigeria have emanated from the civil society, the press, trade unions through the mass media and most importantly, in the recent times, through civic engagement in the new media. However, the military interruption of the democratic process in Nigeria limited the potentials of civic engagement for social transformation for many years. In fact, “the relations between state and society under authoritarian rule in Africa has been described as a case of states without citizens” ([Ayoade 1988](#) cited in [Aiyede 2003:2](#)). Ayoade’s position, evidently corroborated by Aiyede is no doubt true as many social change crusaders were assassinated or exiled while pursuing social change in the nation during the military era. However, the re-establishment of democratic governance in Nigeria in 1999 led to the improvement of social transformation advocacy, especially from the citizens.

The penetration of Internet facilities into Nigeria raised social transformation advocacy ([Dunu and Uzochukwu, 2015](#); [Opeibi, 2015](#)). The internet-enabled platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, 2go, etc. afforded the citizens the opportunity to express their opinions more freely. Some of the many benefits of the new media generally for social transformation advocacy are the democratised space for contributions, the anonymity of the participants in the discourse and the growing ease of access to the new media platforms. All of this can be said to be impacting governance and public policy in Nigeria ([Opeibi, 2015](#)).

Scholars (e.g. [Agang, 2014](#); [Ajiwe et al., 2015](#); [Burgess, 2012](#); [Saale, 2014](#)) have studied the national-cum-social transformation discourse in Nigeria from religious and sociological perspectives. Scholars have examined the place of prayer and the church in Nigeria’s national transformation drive ([Akanbi and Beyers, 2017](#); [Saale, 2014](#)), the potentials of character building through religious values for national transformation ([Raphael, 2014](#)) and the role of charismatic Christian preaching ([Burgess, 2012](#)). The agency of the home video in facilitating social transformation in Nigeria has also been studied ([Ajiwe et al., 2015](#)).

Linguistic studies on advocacy in Nigeria have focused on stylistic features of conflict resolution advocacy texts ([Oyebamiji, 2013](#)), transformation of political cultures in Nigeria ([Opeibi, 2015](#); [Opeibi, 2016](#)), the place of language in social transformation ([Adedimeji, 2005](#); [Fakuade, 2015](#)). These studies generally highlight some of the stylistic and discursive features of conflict and political advocacy in Nigeria. The literature however shows that social transformation advocacy in Nigeria has been neglected. The present study thus seeks to fill this lacuna by adopting a critical discourse-based model to the analysis of texts of social transformation advocacy in mass media such in Nigeria.

3. Methodology

Data for the study encompassed advocacy on social transformation in Nigeria that focus on entrenching democratic values (shunning inducement and political participation), anti-corruption crusade (police extortion, tax evasion, etc.) and security of lives and properties (through entrenchment of religious tolerance, avoidance of fake news, etc.). The focus on the issues is borne out of their topicality in the Nigerian nation. The advocacy texts focused on in the study are those circulated by institutionalised agencies in Nigeria such as National Orientation Agency (NOA), Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), among others.

The data were purposively drawn from speeches and jingles aired on radio and television stations in Nigeria and the Internet, and covered July 2013 to July 2018. The five-year span was premised on the fact that Nigeria witnessed numerous challenges in the areas of insecurity, financial misappropriation and democratic impropriety. All of these negative realities affected the nation, especially Boko Haram and financial misappropriation, and are deemed to have contributed to the economic recession of the nation in the recent past. These troubling developments no doubt led to more aggressive campaigns for social transformation in the country.

4. Theoretical framework

This study is grounded in critical discourse analysis (CDA) focusing on Fairclough's (2015) dialectical-relational approach. According to Wodak and Meyer (2009:27), Fairclough's approach to CDA "focuses upon social conflict in the Marxian tradition and tries to detect its linguistic manifestations in discourses, in specific elements of dominance, difference and resistance". The approach provides affordances for the analysis of discourses by focusing on the dialectical relationships between semiotic systems and social practices.

Data analysis from the perspective of dialectical relational approach spans description, interpretation and explanation (Fairclough, 2000). At the level of description, attention is paid to the formal features of the discourse such as vocabulary (lexis, metaphor), grammar, cohesion and text structure. At the stage of interpretation, how meanings of texts link the texts with their contexts is examined. Finally, at the explanation level, the analyst teases out meanings relating to the broad ideological and topical issues underlying the discourse. The choice of the theory for this study is based on its affordances for the explication of meanings relating to issues of social change and ideology and the dialectics of the oppositions in discourses and texts reflecting the class struggles in the society.

Therefore, in analysing the data for this study, at the descriptive level of analysis, we pay attention to the expressive values of lexical and grammatical resources in the discourse. At the interpretive level, we link the text to the context while at the explanation level, we relate the text to the broad ideological processes of social transformation in Nigeria.

5. Data analysis and discussion

Based on the features of the theoretical framework discussed above, we now examine the critical discourse features of social transformation advocacy in Nigeria. The analysis focuses on framing, legitimation, rhetorical questions, metaphor, nativised language and accentuation of the consequences of negative actions.

5.1. Framing

The discourse is characterised by hegemonic framing particularly with respect to the representation of the persons responsible for the problems of Nigeria. Entmann (1993:52) remarks that "framing is to select aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and or treatment recommendation for the problem described". Therefore, framing involves a way of constructing reality or issues that foreground certain aspects at the expense of others in order to cause the audience to perceive the issues in a particular light. Generally speaking, there is the deployment of hegemonic frames in the discourse which tends to portray the

problems of Nigeria as emanating from the people and not the government of the nation. Below are examples of this kind of hegemonic framing in the discourse:

Excerpt 1 frames the problems of Nigeria and the solution as lying with the people of Nigeria. The text pushes the responsibility of changing Nigeria to the Nigerian citizenry, especially the masses. This explains the significant use of the pronoun "you" in the excerpt which is meant to emphasise that Nigerians who are asking for change are indeed the ones that need to change. This authorial use of pronoun is observed to be ideological by Fairclough (2015:143) who remarks that such pronoun is used to mark "power and solidarity". In this instance, the otherness of the pronoun "you" indexes power as it marks direct accusation of the citizens of Nigeria as responsible for the social problems of the country (see **Excerpt 1**).

Further to the use of the pronoun "you" for coding power, the text producers also mark their power through the use of imperative sentences such as "Let the change begin with you", "Do the right things always to transform Nigeria", etc. The assertive tone of the text through the five imperative sentences in it reflect the power asymmetry between the text producers and the consumers of the text which is consciously reflected by the text producers who have the authority of the government. The superior power of the text producer also reflects in the fact that the opinion of the public is not sought on the need for change in the Nigerian society.

The text also subtly reflects the manipulative character of the government from whose source it emanates as it is silent on the structural problems in Nigeria which have created rooms for the perversion of the citizenry. The text is silent on the conditions that needed to be created by the Nigerian government too in order for people to behave appropriately. Since Fairclough (2003) remarks that what is missing from a text is as important as what resides in the text, the silence on the government's culpability in the problems is an important strategy used to protect the positive face on the government while representing the citizens of Nigeria negatively. However, since the text emanates from the government and is presented through the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) which is a government-owned media organisation, the jingle needed to be slanted to impose the views of the government on the people.

Excerpt 2 further illustrates the hegemonic thinking and action of passing the blames for the social maladies in the Nigerian society to the public. The text educates Nigerians on the need for them to vote wisely as that is the way by which the nation can overcome the leadership problems that it had always had. However, rather than foreground the acts of the politicians who usually entice unsuspecting and many times hapless electorate with money to buy their votes, the text producer appeals to the Nigerian citizens who are said to sell their votes. This selection of information in the text minimises the negative representation of political actors while maximising that of the Nigerian citizens. The conscious use of the possessive pronoun "your" six times in the text is meant to intensify the hegemonic framing of Nigeria's problems as it is directly used to emphasise the central role of Nigerians in the problems

Everyone is calling out for change but nobody wants to change. True change begins with the individual. *So look in the mirror and ask yourself, who me? Yes you. Are you doing the right thing to change Nigeria. Let the change begin with you. Be positive, be patriotic, be right, make a change. Do the right things always to transform Nigeria, Nigeria. Do the right thing to transform Nigeria.*

Excerpt 1. NOA (21st November 2016).

The election is another opportunity to select leaders at state and federal levels. Nigerians, your vote is your power. Your vote is your choice to exercise that power. Do not sell your votes. Do not sell your conscience. Go out on election days and vote. Vote wisely and protect your votes. Say no to electoral malpractice. Say no to election violence. Make your votes count.

Excerpt 2. INEC (www.ourvotescount.com).

of the nation while backgrounding the role of government officials and political actors. The text producer suppresses information on the weak economic situation of the people which had stripped them of their dignity and would make them easily jump at any opportunity to “sell” their votes.

The authorial and distanced nature of the text producer in relation to the Nigerian people reflects in the tenor of the text as the text producer deploys seven imperative sentences in addressing the Nigerian people out of the 10 sentences in the text. Such selection of imperative sentences marks power disequilibrium between the political leaders and the Nigerian people which the text producer intentionally expresses.

5.2. (De)Legitimation as a discursive practice

Legitimation borders on how discourse producers attempt to naturalise their perspectives and condition their audience to accept such perspectives. Van Leeuwen (2008) views legitimation as a system of authority that seeks to establish itself in the consciousness of the people. Different kinds of legitimation are deployed in the discourse to influence the judgment of the public on various aspects of social transformation that the discourse participants call attention to. Below are texts in which legitimation is deployed:

In **Excerpt 3**, there is the deployment of legitimation for the purpose of making Nigerians to eschew the dissemination of fake news. The text producer uses the style of legitimation described by van Leeuwen (2008) as rationalisation to convey the message. The style of legitimation also serves to highlight the persuasive character of the text, as the text producers rather try to delegitimise the spreading of fake news in a persuasive way. The ascription of the status of danger to fake news through the use of the equative verb “is” is meant to make Nigerians believe that the campaign against fake news is in the interest of the public. The use of the collective pronoun “our” in the nominal group “our peace and security” is further meant to give every Nigerian the sense that the persuasion against fake news is in the interest of every Nigerian. The second sentence “In Nigeria, misinformation and fake news is a serious threat to our hard-earned democracy and promotes hatred and misunderstanding between our community” represents the hub of the rationalisation in the text as it highlights the negative effect of fake news which should discourage Nigerians from circulating them.

Excerpt 4 is an example of what van Leeuwen (2008) calls legitimation by moralisation. The text producer uses a dialogue between two persons in which the second person evaluates the

Fake news is a danger to our peace and security. In Nigeria, misinformation and fake news is a serious threat to our hard-earned democracy and promotes hatred and misunderstanding between our community. We are all responsible for stopping the trend of fake news in its tracks. Always check the source and credibility of any news item. Say no to fake news.

Excerpt 3. Federal Ministry of Information and Culture (NTA News at Nine, 12 July 2018).

A ha sir, our tax liability is N167, 250 only. Ah but if we pay through the boys, we can remit N100, 000 AND SETTLE them FOR AS LITTLE AS 20,000. That way we will save money. Can I go ahead sir?

Oh no, you can't. Why can't we pay the exact tax due to us. Why should we pay through touts? FIRS has told us that we can pay to their collection banks. That way, we will not be enriching the pockets of unworthy touts. In fact, when we pay to banks, we save time and avoid soiling our company's name. FIRS is taking steps to ensure that tax payment is convenient for you.

Excerpt 4. FIRS (<http://www.firs.gov.ng/Media-Centre/Pages/Advert%20Campaigns.aspx>).

proposition of the first person on tax evasion from a moral angle. The tone of moral evaluation in the text is first activated through the interrogatives “Why can't we pay the exact tax due to us?” and “Why should we pay through touts?” The interrogatives as used in the text are not actually meant to seek information but to condemn the proposition of the first voice in the excerpt. The subject of tax evasion through bribing of corrupt officers of the tax agencies is a popular one in Nigeria through which the nation loses enormous wealth. Therefore, the moralisation in the excerpt is meant to persuade Nigerians to embrace proper payment of their taxes. In fact, to reinforce the persuasion in the text, the benefits of paying taxes through the proper channel are given in the text through declarative sentences “That way, we will not be enriching the pockets of unworthy touts” and “In fact, when we pay to banks, we save time and avoid soiling our company's name”.

5.3. Rhetorical questions

Badarneh (2009) describes rhetorical questions as important rhetorical device used to present an assertion in the form of an interrogative statement. In Nigeria's social transformation advocacy, rhetorical questions are deployed since the discourse is aimed at provoking the reaction of Nigerians towards the negative realities in their countries. Below, we provide examples of rhetorical questions in the discourse:

In **Excerpt 5**, the text producer deploys polar questions to sensitise Nigerians on their rights not to be extorted by the Police. Such a deployment of rhetorical question is meant to make Nigerians stand up for their rights while knowing that they are protected by the law of the land. The polar questions are also tactically used by the Nigeria Police to positively represent themselves as fully opposed to such practice as bribery which is so widespread within the ranks of the institution. Therefore, even though the text producers attempt to demonstrate altruism through the text, the text might also be said to have some manipulative character as it feigns ignorance of the wide coverage of bribery in the institution.

Excerpt 6 also features the use of rhetorical question to prick the consciousness of Nigerians about the subject of religious and ethnic clashes and killings. The question is given prominence in the text as it begins the jingle, showing that even though the text producers do not expect a verbal response from the audience, they want them to reflect seriously on the question and make it renew

In your contact with any police in any part of Nigeria, **have you been asked to give a bribe? Have you been requested to pay money for bail?** if you have a complaint for the police, the police will put a smile to your face immediately. Remember bail is free. Police is your friend.

Excerpt 5. Police Anti-corruption Jingle (8th November 2016).

Do you know that you had no hand in deciding your own parents, ethnicity or country? Then 99% of practising Muslims and Christians do so because they follow the footsteps of their parents. The Muslim or Christian whom you think is going to hell because he or she does not profess your faith is you. Had you and your parents been into that other religion. Fellow Nigerian, we are all one, one people. One destiny. The attitude of it is either my way, my religion, my ethnicity or I turn to violence must stop now.

Excerpt 6. NOA (From NTA Archive, July 30, 2018)

their minds about the unnecessary hate and killings in Nigeria. To further show that the text producers place much emphasis on the content of the rhetorical question, much of the remaining part of the text actually answers the question by elucidating the fact that religious and ethnic sentiments which lead to extremism are baseless and needless. Therefore, given the seriousness of the issue of insecurity in Nigeria foisted mainly by ethnic and religious extremism, the text producers consider it an important strategy to cause the audience to reflect on the reality using a rhetorical question (see [Excerpts 5 and 6](#)).

5.4. Appeal to linguistic nativism

Another feature of the discourse is the use of language in a way that accommodates different categories of citizens that the advocacy texts are meant for. Given the diverse linguistic situation of Nigeria, the text producers deploy texts of the different languages in Nigeria in order to make people from the different parts of the nation to identify with the campaign for social transformation and accept the message conveyed in the text. Therefore, there are texts that are constructed using different indigenous languages in Nigeria. For instance, apart from texts that are characterised by complete use of an indigenous language, e.g., Yoruba, there are those that are marked by the mixing of codes such as Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo as can be seen below:

In [excerpt 7](#), the text producer intentionally identifies with specific ethnic groups in Nigeria through the use of the languages associated with those ethnic groups alongside the English language in the text. Rather than serve the purpose of polarisation, the ethnic identities in the text serve a unification or nationalistic purpose. This can be said to be a conscious strategy to appeal to those segments of the country to consider themselves as important to the change agenda of the nation and actively involve themselves in the activities or vision of the government of the nation regarding the desired change in the nation. For instance, there is the use of Yoruba language in the text in the expression “Asiko ti to”. The expression is used to appeal to the Yoruba by making them feel that they are actively involved in the change agenda of Nigeria.

The use of the indigenous expression “lokachi yayi” is also meant to foreground another ethnic or cultural group in the Nigerian nation. The expression is Hausa and since the Hausa are very populous and have a proud heritage, it is pertinent to reflect them in the discourse with a view to giving them a sense of belonging in the campaign for social change in Nigeria. Similarly, the use of “Oghe ru-ola” is targeted at identifying with the Igbo ethnic group

Hear the call. Call to change. Stand up, Nigeria. Change is here. It's going to stay. Change begins with you. O ya make we go. Asiko ti to, so let the change begin from within. Lokachi yayi. Oghe ruo-la. Change begins with you and me. Change begins with me. Change begins with me.

Excerpt 7. NOA (21st November 2016).

Wetin dey happen, wetin dey sele for Nigeria. Rumour no dey for corruption in Nigeria. My people na ogbonge talk I carry come for una so. Make una listen o. The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission no dey see, hear corruption at all at all. Make you say no to corruption. Make you report anybody wey do magomago, cuwacuwa or person wey collect egunje to ICPC. No fear. ICPC go protect you... Cuwacuwa and magomago na big crime wey no go do us better. ICPC go waylay you anytime, anywhere wey you put your head.

Excerpt 8. Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC, 11th July 2013).

in the Nigerian society. Through the conscious appeal to the segment of the Nigerian nation by the use of the expression, the people of the region would feel happy to associate with the campaign for social change in Nigeria. The fact that expressions from all the three indigenous languages (Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo) have the same meaning “time is now” shows that they are not only used to consciously foreground the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria and involve the members of the ethnic groups and others in the social transformation initiative but also to emphasise the urgency of the social transformation drive of the “Change Begins with Me” campaign.

It is significant that there is the use of Pidgin English in the text as this can also be said to be a strategy of appealing to some segments of the Nigerian society. Even though many people of different ethnic groups now use pidgin for communication especially in cosmopolitan cities like Lagos and Abuja, there is a sense in which pidgin is primarily associated with the people of Southeastern Nigeria and other people who do not have sufficient facility in English language. There are, for instance, many Igbo people who acquire pidgin as their mother tongue because it is the language of the home. Therefore, the use of pidgin in the code-switched text can be said to be a conscious strategy of giving a sense of belonging to the Igbo people who primarily use pidgin in the Nigerian society. Let us consider the following example of pidgin in the discourse:

[Excerpt 8](#) which addresses the corruption problem of Nigeria clearly illustrates the use of pidgin English as a way of giving a local colour to the communication and reaching different categories of people in the Nigerian society. The pidginised expressions are marked at the lexical and grammatical levels. At the lexical level, there are lexical coinages such as “ogbonge”, “magomago”, “egunje” and “cuwacuwa” which are not only used to encode serious corrupt practices in the Nigerian society but also to give some creative or aesthetic effects to the text. At the grammatical level, there is the use of pidginised forms such as “no dey”, “wey no” and “carry come” with the meanings “is not”, “is not” and “bring to” respectively. The expressions being typical pidgin forms in Nigeria naturally will appeal to the people at the lower level of the society who do not have sufficient facility in the English language and who had to encounter the message of social transformation being passed across in the text.

Therefore, with the use of pidgin, Nigerians in villages and other settlements are carried along on the transformation being sought and are made to know the role they ought to play to enhance such social transformation. This way, ICPC is also subtly passing across the message that there is no excuse for getting involved in any corrupt act in Nigeria as every segment of the society is carried along in the campaign against such practices and should avoid corrupt acts.

5.5. Metaphorisation of social transformation acts

According to [Burkholder and Henry \(2009:98\)](#), metaphor is a rhetorical device that involves the understanding of a concept in

terms of another. Nigeria's advocacy discourse features significant use of metaphor by the participants in the discourse for the purpose of deepening meanings being produced.

For instance, given the action-motivated nature of the discourse of social transformation, metaphors that refer to actions and physical movement are deployed for meaning production in the discourse. Such metaphors are often deployed to represent certain needed actions for the utmost positive transformation of Nigeria as can be seen below:

In **Excerpt 9**, there is the deployment of metaphor of physical action which is used to capture an action that the text producers expect of the Nigerian people for social transformation to take place. In the text, the verbal expression “stand” is not used in the plain sense of a person assuming the physical posture of being upright but refers to the need for Nigerians to vote for appropriate persons into political offices. Therefore, the metaphor is used to call Nigerians to action for genuine change to be witnessed in the country.

In **Excerpt 10**, another metaphoric verbal lexeme “sit” is used to capture a particular action of a people that the text producer considers counter-productive for meaningful change to take place in Nigeria. The lexeme “sit” as used refers to lack of action on the situation of Nigeria by the citizens of the country and the text producer indicates that such an outlook is negative for Nigeria. Rather, as can be seen in the latter part of the expression, Nigerians are encouraged to act for the emancipation of the country.

Another kind of metaphor which features in the discourse is metaphor of war. Some participants believe that a positive transformation of Nigeria involves some kind of war because many of the nation's problems have been entrenched and require some ruthlessness. **Taiwo (2013:201)** affirms this tendency for social actors in Nigeria to envision social change as war when he says “a battle is all about establishing freedom from dominant forces. In Africa, national problems are seen as dominant forces from which they would need the mandate of the people to free them”. This propensity to view national problems as war manifests in the metaphoric language of the discourse in focus. Specifically, some of the metaphors in the discourse invoke the idea of war as can be seen in the following examples from the data:

Excerpt 11 shows how pursuing social change is conceived as war as the lexeme “fighting” which is a collocate of “war” is used to represent advocacy against corruption which is a matter of serious national concern in Nigeria. Since corruption has become a monster in the Nigerian society, the text producer subtly expresses the idea that its eradication would take a war-like dimension as the people have to engage in a battle to uproot corruption from the Nigerian society. The conscious use of the nominal “fight” in reference to the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria is thus used to intimate the audience to the fact that the campaign against corruption is a serious matter and that the people should eschew corrupt practices in order not to face the wrath of the law.

Yes O. NIJA for life. It is time to lift your hand and vote for the correct candidate at the upcoming state and federal elections. **Stand up** and be counted to make a change. Stop complaining about your state and country and do something. Vote. This time everybody must come out. Papas, mamas, persons with disabilities and others from 18 years and above. INEC officials have been trained to ensure that no matter your challenges, you have access to vote. This time around, we are voting, not fighting.

Excerpt 9. INEC (August 5th, 2014).

Rather than **sit** back and complain endlessly, we have decided to act pragmatically, with the launch of this National Re-orientation Campaign. The campaign will not be a sprint but a marathon that will run the course of our tenure.

Excerpt 10. *Change Begins with Me* Speech (11th September 2016).

I need not mention the serious effort we have engaged in since the inception of this administration on the **fight** against corruption in our public life. With the progress we have so far made in that regard, we feel the need to ensure that we put in place the necessary sustainable framework for action and measures that will help to entrench and consolidate the progress achieved so far.

Excerpt 11. *Change Begins with Me* Campaign Inauguration Speech (8th September 2016).

Whatever the form of corruption, whatever the method of corrupt cash transfer. We are closing in on your hideout. It doesn't matter who is involved. EFCC will get you anytime, anywhere. EFCC will get you anywhere anytime.

Excerpt 12. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Relayed on EFCC, a programme sponsored by EFCC and aired on NTA).

Excerpt 12 also features the use of metaphor of war to capture the intensity of the efforts of the government of Nigeria in ensuring that the society is corruption-free. In the text, the expressions “closing in” and “hideout” are metaphorical with meanings relating to military operations being conveyed through the expressions. While “closing in” captures the military action of apprehending enemies or other forces, “hideout” refers to spots that military groups or formations take in order to protect themselves and ambush their opponents. Therefore, through the expressions, the text producer draws an analogy between the activities of EFCC and military officers in war zones with the semantic import that EFCC is ruthless and leaves no stone unturned in stamping corruption out of Nigeria. The commission is presented as inevitably competent to apprehend all corrupt persons in Nigeria from their hiding places.

The war metaphor invoked in the text also manifests in the assertive sentences used by the text producers “We are closing in on you” and “EFCC will get you anytime, anywhere”. The occurrence of the sentence “EFCC will get you anytime, anywhere” twice in the excerpt is meant to emphasise the inevitability of arrest of offenders by the EFCC. In the text, threats are issued to Nigerians that they would be arrested once they engaged in any corrupt activity irrespective of their status or the efforts they make to evade arrests. The import of the warning is that the Nigerians should consider the negative outcome of their corrupt activities which they cannot evade before they embark on any corrupt activity.

5.6. Accentuating the repercussion of negative actions

Another major discursive style in the discourse is the accentuation of the repercussions of the negative actions of Nigerians. It is a fact that one of the factors that contribute to improper conducts in human societies is the neglect of what could be the consequences of such actions at the point that people engage in them. Therefore, it is often very important to remind people of the negative consequences that their indiscretions could have on them now and in the future. The text producers seem to be conscious of this as many

A beautiful life is possible. Stand with the Standards Organisation of Nigeria. Avoid substandard products, electrical appliances with damaging effects, tyres without D.O.T. numbers. 12.5 kg cylinders is a disaster waiting to happen. Substandard cables can cause inferno. Other substandard products to avoid include batteries, electrical bulbs, iron doors, wire, breakpads. They will only endanger our today and future. Join hands with SON ridding our country of substandard products. Don't buy or sell substandard products. See something, say something. Standards Organisation of Nigeria, Improving Lives through standards.

Excerpt 13. SON (NTA Network News, January 16, 2018).

of the texts are laden with information on the possible consequences of certain negative actions of people not only for the nation but also for the people especially when they are caught. Below are texts in which the repercussions of engaging in negative acts are thematised to enhance the impact of the message of social transformation on Nigerians:

In **Excerpt 13**, the text producer tries to appeal to Nigerians to be fully conscious of the electrical appliances that they use in their houses. Using the strategy of enumeration, the text producer lists those electrical appliances that the people should avoid as “tyres without D.O.T. numbers, “12.5 K.G cylinders”, “batteries”, “electrical bulbs”, “wire” and “break pads”. The enumeration of the items is meant to concretise the message of the text producers that Nigerians should avoid substandard products and give them a specific idea of the kinds of electrical appliances they should avoid. In view of the persuasive intent of the excerpt, the text is characterised by strategic use of declarative sentences such as “Substandard cables can cause inferno”, “Other substandard products to avoid include batteries, electrical bulbs, iron doors, wire, break pads” and “They will only endanger our today and future”. The sentences are used to foreground the danger of using substandard products and make Nigerians avoid patronising such products. However, in order to assert their authority on the need to get rid of substandard products in Nigeria, the text producers also strategically deploy imperative sentences such as “Avoid substandard products, electrical appliances with damaging effects, tyres without D.O.T. numbers”, “Don't buy or sell substandard products” and “See something, say something”.

Excerpt 14 also illustrates the accentuation of negative actions for Nigeria and Nigerians. Using the strategy of enumeration also, the text producers state that “bloodbath”, “poverty”, “stagnation” and “suffering” as some of the consequences of the careless and imprecision of a nation. The text echoes the view that the growth of Nigeria would be a mirage as long as religion and ethnicity are considered important factors in the nation. The lexical choices use to accentuate the impact of negative actions of carelessness and imprecision paint a gloomy picture, thus having the capacity to stir Nigerians to action on why they ought not to allow that happen to their nation.

Carelessness will destroy any nation. When a people live without precision, simply existing through time, her doom is irrefutable. Bloodbath, poverty, stagnation, suffering are among some of the many things that the nation is bound to suffer. Our nation Nigeria is about to be shaken to its very roots because of our ignorance especially us the youths. The ills that haunt us is beyond any religion ... beyond any tribe or tongue.... If we ever want to grow from a developing country to a developed one, we must put our religion and differences aside.

Excerpt 14. One Voice Nigeria (NTA, July 8th, 2018).

6. Conclusion

This study has examined discursive strategies in the social transformation advocacy texts circulated by institutional agencies in Nigeria. The deployment of Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis enabled us to tease out meanings pertaining to group legitimation and delegitimation, discourse control and power. At the description stage of analysis, we identified and analysed linguistic devices in the discourse such as lexemes, metaphor, and grammatical features such as sentence structure, adverbials and pronominals. These linguistic devices show how the participants express meanings bordering on nation building, ideological orientation and power. Also, through intertextual references in the analysis and discussion, we fulfilled the demands of the interpretation level of the analysis as we were able to relate the linguistic features to the context of the discourse. Finally, at the explanation stage, we discussed how the ideological orientation of the text producers and power dynamics informed the discursive strategies of hegemonic framing and legitimation in the discourse.

The study reveals that identity mapping is an important agency for mobilising people for national transformation as the text producers tried to appeal to the national consciousness of the targets of the advocacy texts for the message delivery to be effective. This also involved the invocation of ethnic sentiments and affiliations for cohesive purpose as the major ethnic groups in the nation were referenced as a mark of respect for the different peoples of Nigeria in order to motivate them to key into the social transformation agenda being propagated. Further evidence for positive appeal to the people manifested in the use of pidgin English to reach every segment of the Nigerian society.

The study however shows that even in national discourses presumed to be based on the sincere desire for national reformation, power is centrally implicated and shapes the cadences of the meanings expressed in the discourse. The authorial status of the text producers in particular creates a hegemonic discourse model which projects the social problems in Nigeria as a fall-out of the inactions and actions of the mass of the people from an authorial stance. This broad discursive orientation which reflects in the way the problems of Nigeria are framed reflects the power disequilibrium between the persons from whom the texts emanate and the public that are expected to consume the texts.

The study thus concludes that while the discourse of social transformation in Nigeria is hinged on the desire to impact the society, it offers a platform for the subtle expression of ideology and enactment of power. The construction of social change by the text producers in the discourse who are largely government agents focuses on the citizens while suppressing the role of the government in the social crises and social-cum-national recovery. This ideological squaring and power indexing show that perceptions of the text producers influence their positioning in the discourse and their ultimate construction of the social problems in Nigeria and thus point to the need for research on Nigeria's social transformation campaign that is citizen-generated.

Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2018.09.002>.

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