POLITICKING LIVES AND PROXIMISING SOCIO-POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN DISASTER SITUATION

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Abstract

Human life is at the centre of disaster consequences. This often leads to immense politicking and 'responsibilising' of social and political roles, which open vistas for more research, especially from the ecolinguistic and ecocritical perspectives. This research understudies politicking and responsibilising of social and political roles in the face of disasters in local communities. It adopts Piotr Cap's Proximisation and Transitivity in the Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, as theoretical framework. The data are six purposively selected news reports downloaded from the YouTube videos and the websites of Channels Television and Television Continental, two widespread local television stations in Nigeria that cover and broadcast news of flood disasters in local communities. The data are transcribed to texts, and analysed qualitatively, using the top-down approach. The results show that disasters in local communities are leveraged as political platforms for scoring political points. However, when it comes to actual response to disasters, there is 'responsibilisation' between social and political agents. Political 'responsibilisation' strategies in the data include 'bureaucratising role relations,' 'defining agency response' and 'legitimising or delegitimizing constraints,' while the most dominant social 'responsibilisation' strategy is 'collective response.' The study avers that climate change discourses and disaster management or responses are politicised; and hence, affected by political and social 'responsibilisation' process.

Keywords: Legitimisation; Politics; Climate change; Media discourse, Disaster management, Resonsibilisation

Introduction

Disasters are terrible circumstances requiring swift response(s) from all agencies and stakeholders involved in disaster management. However, the manner of response and attention to such disaster circumstances has always been talking points in news reports all over the world. Stibbe (2015) raised concern that ecological issues may be unappealing to power blocs, especially when they affect the economy and social development, which are vastly, features responsible for the spate of disasters in many communities in Africa. Similarly, disasters do not receive the expected concern or attention from government. In most cases, responses are quite belated (Nex-Stevenson, 2013), while in other cases, they are politicised, for the sake of scoring political points, which is a significant talking point in this study. Disaster responses, in local communities, in developing countries like Nigeria are unplanned, unorganised, and problematic. Thus, disasters in local communities often cause massive scales of destruction, suffering and losses, such that the victims cannot recover for a long time.

'Responsibilisation', as adopted by this study, is termed as the process of taking or shoving responsibilities at a period of need. In this case, it is a political strategy that affects every instance of decision making, especially by the government when it comes to responding to disasters. Effective processes of responding to disasters in developing countries like Nigeria mean assigning roles or responsibilities to social and political agents. The ability to recognise, accept and perform these roles is coined as 'responsibilisation'. Decisions taken in the corridors of power affect how people react or respond (Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 2008), especially to situations like disasters. An operational hypothesis is that many communities wait for government's responses before they can act. Thus, delays and failures to respond always

complicate the victims' problems. Another notable concern, in political responses to disasters in local communities, relates to the goal or *modus operandi* of the government officials – public officers.

The questions that relate to the gap for this study include, to what do political agents channel their responses? What are their purposes or objectives, when responding or providing relief packages to victims of disasters? Do they respond with the required goal of restoring the losses of the victims and of the ecosystem, as interrogated by Gandage and Ranadive (2009), or pursue their selfish political interests, which amount to legitimising their political positions? The assessment of political actors is always a talking point during disasters. In other words, how they respond to disasters becomes a yardstick for legitimising or delegitimising their political offices, from the perspective of commentators, victims or concerned individuals either at the scenes of the disasters or following the events through different channels.

Stibbe (2015) also points out that there is bureaucracy, not only in disaster signification, but also in its management. For instance, the roles or functions of management agencies and institutions are clearly spelt out in documents. The significant question that arouses attention in this study is whether they can perform these functions or even carry out the responsibilities attributed to them or otherwise. If the intervention of Fill and Muhlhausler (2001:2) that 'all discourse about natural phenomena is highly selective' is anything to consider in this regard, then it can be surmised, emphasising on the word 'selective', that responses to disaster, apart from being politicised, are bases for shelving or shifting responsibilities from one agency to another, and between the federal and state governments. This is further conceptualised as 'bureaucratising roles' in this present study and is observed as a significant gap in scholarship. Another notable point or question, in connection to responsibilising roles is, who takes the praise in the event of successful response or management of disaster, and who

takes the blame when things go wrong? This amounts to blame shifting, which is worthy of attention in this study.

Disaster responses in local communities, in many instances, may be entirely up to the indigenous people. This may happen when the agencies and authorities who should respond engage in politicking. In this case, the indigenous people must develop unusual coping strategies (Sharma, Gupta, and Shaw, 2009). The gap for this study, in relation to this assertion, is posed in two significant questions; what are these indigenous response – coping strategies, and how are they utilised by the local people, when help is not forthcoming? In addition to this, the question of how the indigenous people collectively respond to disasters is a talking point in this study. Bempah (2011) agrees that the responses of indigenous communities are not homogenous Response to disaster varies from one local community to the other, and in some cases, it depends on the gravity of the disaster and other factors that are revealed in this study.

Literature review: Propaganda in disasters and climate change reporting

The likelihood of disaster narratives to be embellished or mixed with propaganda, even in mainstream media, is high. Alexander (2009:4) suggests that it is hard for the media to report issues of 'the environment or ecological problems without a spin'. Spinning in this context implies embellishing it, sometimes for the purpose of mitigating the effect or consequences to the public. In other words, the overall function of the press, which is being informative, will be mortgaged for persuasiveness. For instance, instead of reporting disasters 'like it is,' the media is likely to tell it the way they want people to believe it or the way they feel people may want to hear it. How they arrive at the decision of what people want to hear is accounted for in literature. Stibbe (2015) employs the analogy of producer-consumer relationship to define the

process of news circulation to the public. In this case, the producer is the news agencies and the workforce responsible for broadcasting the news, while the consumer is the audience who is the end-product of the news in circulation. In Stibbe's (2015:29) specific words, the story is published to enable 'consumers maximise their own satisfaction.'

Alexander (2009:4) notes that the obligation of the media, with respect to publication of ecological or environmental information is the protection of 'the environment', claiming that the media aligns with the desire of people to hear things that are favourable to the ecosystem like 'clean air and fresh water and a generally unpolluted atmosphere'. These are the factors that assure them of the safety of the planet, in the face of threats of climate change, due to Ozone layer depletion. In contrast, the safety of the environment is not as primary to the capitalist and economy enthusiasts. To them, what is primary is political and economic 'hegemony,' rather than 'survival' of the ecosystem (Chomsky 2003:231). Even in the face of obvious truth of disasters and subsequent threats to humanity, to the rich and powerful, there is appearance and reality in reportage of disaster. Thus, Miller (2004) argues that in reporting war and the subtexts of disaster, there is a possibility for the media to engage in 'official misinformation', which amounts to propaganda.

Media propaganda can be a strategy to save face if placed within the six parameters or principles submitted by Corner (2007:674-5) as 'communicative practice'. These practices include deliberate lying, that is, attempting to construct and circulate false information and alternative truths. This sequences to withholding sensitive information or denying involvement. Withholding information leads to 'strategic selectivity,' which implies omitting account or 'important information' (Corner, 2007:674), for ideological reasons. There is also the tendency to exaggerate information. In the case of disasters, the tendency to undermine rather than exaggerate scenes. Corner (2007) opines that

there is also the possibility to explicitly covert scenes to mitigate fear. This other side of the coin is engaging in affective plea to induce 'persuasive force.' Lastly, propaganda reporting entails the conspicuous use of rhetorical forms in linguistic texts, visual images, or other mediated strategies to influence thought or meaning. In the view of Jowett and O'Donnell (1992: 4) propaganda is a 'deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist'. The implication of this to this study is to aver that political responses to disasters can be propaganda or motivated by political or 'self-interest,' which is one of the indices of propaganda.

Critical discourse and disaster representation

Critical discourse is a comprehensive approach to engaging texts, not only from the ideological point of view (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1996), or historical perspective (Wodak, 2009), but a dynamic way of doing discourse analysis using a plethora of linguistic and discourse features and theories. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a 'systematic, analytical endeavour, which aims to reveal the nature of systems of rules, principles and values' in texts or discourses (Foucault, 1980:110). In the perspective of Alexander (2009), CDA employs language to give a 'different understanding' or to illuminate problems that are 'misunderstood' or 'misinterpreted'. One of the grey areas, of course, that CDA is crucial is in analysing or interrogating the representations of the 'causes' of disasters and the concomitant effect on the environment or ecology. It is an eclectic analytical approach, as the co-opted term, 'critical,' suggests. Locke (2004) calls it 'a ubiquitous epithet', which accounts for the different approaches and models that have emanated from CDA over the years. However, the approach's most unique feature is that it deals with performative texts, both spoken and written (Fairclough, 2004:119). However, language brings together all

'semiotic modes' which include visual images, gestures, and other forms of significations that are parts of social representations of social events (van Leeuwen, 2005).

Archer (2000) argues that there is a one-to-one significance between the social structures and social events, which are concrete forms of representations. Relationship between social structure and social event is further established as 'analytical dualism' (Archer, 2000:3). Critical discourse has been formalized as a research method that focuses on identifying and describing underlying commonalities in a corpus. Among other things, CDA focuses on discourses that centre on 'power relations that are social and historically situated,' 'ideological inscription,' 'mediated social relations of capitalist, production, and consumption, 'subjectivity,' groups or societies' privileges over others, class oppression versus racism, and gender (Kincheloe and Mclaren, 1994:139-40). van Dijk (1996) submits that CDA is an attempt to 'account for the relationships between discourse and social power'. According to van Dijk, it is a conscious attempt to 'describe and explain how power abuse is enacted, reproduced, or legitimised by the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions' (van Dijk, 1996:84).

There are many ways that power is enacted, such as individual, social, when it applies to dominant groups, and institutional, in areas like media, law, education or corporate business, among others. Power can be characterised or conceptualised; this happens by enacting variables like dominance, abuse, (il)legal, (im)moral, (il)legitimate, and control. Power is enacted through access to social privileges or resources like political mandate or other positions, wealth, jobs, in this case, provisions of aid, and other essential public privileges. It is important to note that social power is enacted in a recurrent manner. In every area where social power is evident, there is tendency for reproduction, if the (con)texts are similar, which is the main argument and focus of CDA (Clegg, 1989; Lukes, 1974; 1986; Wrong, 1979). The peculiarity of

CDA is that it can be adapted to various forms of discourses; hence, its application to disaster situations in news reports.

Theoretical Orientation

Two theories are co-opted for this study, proximisation by Piotr Cap, and transitivity from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. The two operations of these theories are significant in the politicisation of disaster reporting in mainstream media. Proximisation is an interdisciplinary, cognitive-pragmatic-critical theory. This is because it annexes the principles of critical Linguistics, Pragmatics and CDA in the analysis of texts revolving around political actors. Cap (2013) submits that the theory symbolically construes any kind of operation that revolves around the 'conceptualisation of peripheral entities that are evinced in a Discourse Space (DS). In other words, it is the localisation of entities within or around a deictic centre, which is also located in the DS. In other terms, Proximisation is justified or enforced by political leaders in their speeches to serve certain socio-political goals (Cap, 2013:47). Proximisation is also applicable in media – news reporting, where the discourse space is 'mediatised,' and marked by a speaker-addressee territory, conceptualised in terms of 'peripheral' or 'marginal' (Kopytowska, 2010). For instance, the ability to access news contents is subject to occupying a deictic centre, within the Discourse Space.

The most defining relation of proximisation is legitimisation. It is as if both are linked in Cap's (2006) analytical framework. However, there are three principles and notations that define the application of the theory. These are the Spatial (S), Temporal (T) and Axiological (A) proximisation. Much as these concepts are aligned with Chilton's (2005) parameters of deixis; they go beyond the primary notion. In other words, they are not 'reduced to a finite repository of deictic expressions' but are broadly 'expanded to cover the bigger lexico-

grammatical phrases and discourse expressions,' for construal of complex discourse forms (Cap, 2013:4). However, in definite terms, the STA model is operationalised by 'central entities labelled as IDCs (Inside the Deictic Center) (Inside the Deictic Center)), and 'peripheral entities' called 'Outside-the-Deictic-Center' (ODCs) (Cap, 2013:4). These two principles operate as the geographical, geopolitical distance, and ideological distance within the DS. For instance, IDCs are construed by 'political/public speaker and her direct audience, who share positive values,' while the ODCs, on the other hand, are conceptualized entities with negative values.

Cap (2013:10) submits that Spatial proximization 'lies in a pragmatic/strategic discourse construal of a physical 'movement' of the ODC entities in the direction of the deictic centre', which are the construed IDCs. In other words, the IDCs in spatial proximisation and other models are averred by tangible lexical forms that impact the ODC. These can be lexical items or phrases, even clauses. Cap (2013) marks temporal proximisation with time in symmetrical notations that is past-to-present, and future-to-present. The interface between these symmetrical representations are other representations, which are Real-Time (RT) and Construed-Time (CT). Temporal proximisation is the 'forced construal of 'now,' that is the speaker's present time, which becomes the pivotal point in the frame of event or its representation. Lastly, Axiological proximisation is conceptualised as 'a forced construal of a gathering ideological conflict between entities in the DS. It can be lower in probability, when it relies on or works with both spatial and temporal proximisation, or high in probability, when it is independent. The latter can be construed or achieved by pragmatic principles like inference, implicature and explicature, while the spatial and temporal could be blended easily with transitivity.

Hart (2014) opines that transitivity is the act of accounting for processes placed strategically in clauses and stating their effects in

relation to plausible participants. Transitivity is a system that provides rules for identifying the 'entities in the world and, crucially, the way that they interact with or relate to (Hart, 2014:22). Fontaine (2013) argues that it enhances full realisation of the clause in any metafunctional disposition. In simple terms, the meaning of a clause and the agents are distributed by processes (verbs), which are the predicative elements of the clause. The process can be transitive or intransitive (or copular), which determines the nature of participants in the clause. Transitivity is thus concerned with the distribution of arguments (a term co-opted from Transformational Generative Grammar) or participants (in the core systemic functional grammar parlance). Halliday (1976:30) avers that 'transitivity is the grammar of processes... and the participants in these processes, and the attendant circumstances.' reinforcing the principle of lexocogrammatical, John and Atolagbe (2021) argue that transitivity extends beyond processes and participants; it stretches to the level of experiences; that is, the situation in discourse, and how they are conditioned by the sociocultural context, that also informs the circumstances. Halliday identifies six transitivity processes, which are, material process, mental process, verbal process, behavioural process, relational (attributive and identifying) process and existential process; each having its own averring processes and participant notations (see Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, Hart, 2014, John and Atolagbe, 2021).

Methodology

The data for this study are six purposively selected news reports from two mainstream media which were also purposively selected. These media are Channels Television (CHNLSTV) and Television Continental (TVCONT). These two platforms have widespread coverage in Nigeria and have dedicated programmes or news segments for broadcasting flood disasters in local communities in Nigeria. The

data were downloaded from http://youtube.com and the websites of the respective platforms, http://channelstv.com and http://tvc.tv respectively. The data were transcribed into texts and labelled using the abbreviated term CHNLSTV01 – 02, and TVCONT03 – 04. These four data that make up the population churned out a plethora of texts showing the main contents in the analytical section. However, only a few representative texts were analysed qualitatively, using the top-down approach. The analysis in two broad sections, political responsibiliation and social responsibilisation, using the theoretical tools represented in the analytical model below.
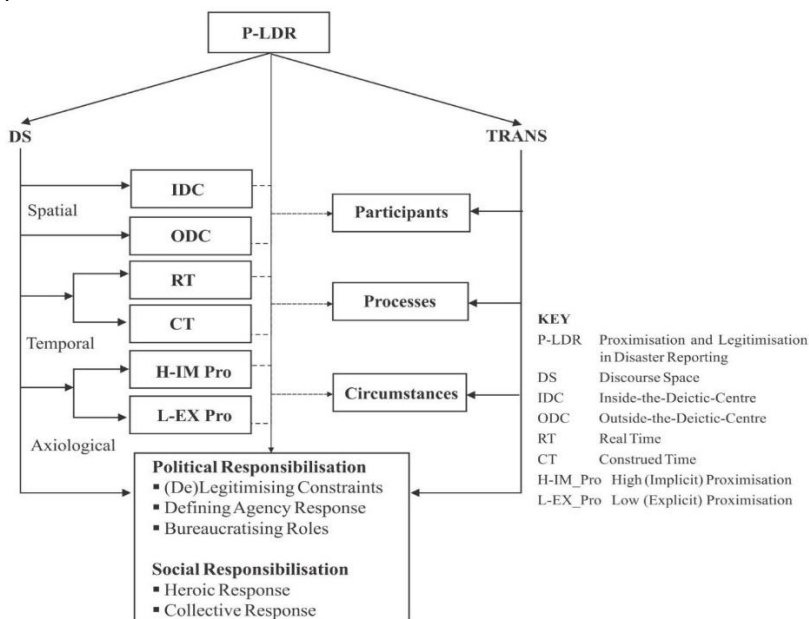

 Fig. 3.1. (De)legitimisation strategies in disaster management in news reporting (*Source*: Mine)

Data analysis and discussion of findings

'Responsibilisation' is the act of taking or shoving responsibilities by social and political agents in response to ecological disasters in local communities, in this case, in Nigeria as represented in the data.

Although the data used for this study is news reports by reporters and presenters, the focus is on political and social agents that are reported in the news. Decisions and modalities to manage disasters are taken by political power blocs, individuals at the scene of disasters, or even the affected victims. Hence, this analytical section is divided into two broad sections; that is, 'political responsibilisation', and 'social responsibilisation'.

Political responsibilisation in disaster situations

Three strategies are observed to be political responses to disasters in local communities. These are (de)legitimising constraints, defining agency response, and bureaucratising roles. The political agents that resonate, especially inside-the-deictic-centre (IDC), are the politicians and representatives of the agencies tasked with the responsibility of managing disasters. The data and analyses in the following subsections project these findings.

(De)legitimising response and constraints

Legitimisation is a subset of proximisation. Every action taken by the government, especially in disaster situations, is for the purpose of legitimisation. This is also for the greater purpose of scoring political points. The implication of this is that disasters provide political office holders the opportunity to reach out to victims and distribute petty materials to attract encomiums and personal approval (legitimisation), which is a short-term response, rather than concentrating on the long-term responses or strategies in managing the disasters. Even when there are constraints and hitches, or even failure to respond swiftly, which is often the case, as seen in the data, attempts are made by the IDCs, agents of government to legitimise such problems, representing them as necessary phenomena, unfortunate situations beyond their control or simply endemic problems in the communities. However, the way the

media report these issues or responses, the framing of the news and the agents, using the strategy of transitivity, determines whether proximisation, in this sense, is for the purpose of legitimisation or delegitimisation.

Excerpt

> i.   ... what is extra-ordinary right now is that officials have not been able to report any casualties yet. They said that they have received none of those reports at this time, that was at our last check, when the President's press secretary held a press conference earlier. We've heard the same thing from officials. We are still waiting for another update that will give us a wider glimpse of is going on here again... **(TVCONT.05)**
>
> ii.   Well! The government can still do a lot more. The government doesn't need to wait until when the issue is there before you start looking for solution... **(TVCONT.06)**

Excerpts (i) and (ii) show the deployment of axiological proximisation. In this case, there is explicit delegitimisation of the response of the government and its 'officials.' First, there is a deliberate attempt to withhold information, as presented in the behavioural process. The behaver, 'officials,' which are the IDCs are obviously not informed or abreast with the activities culminating in the dilemma of the ODCs, the 'casualties,' which is happening in the real-time (RT), as represented in the temporal, 'right now.' Conceptually, there is a functional mapping of the time in the existential process, serving as the subordinate clause, 'what is extra-ordinary.' This is also in the behaved in the behavioural process of the main clause, marked by 'not been able,' and 'yet.' The implication is that, as at that conceptual time of reporting, there is poor response to the situation by the government the management agencies,

who are supposed to be following closely all disaster situations in the country.

The ability to respond to the situation, is portrayed by temporal proximisation. Conceptually, there is the interface between and among past-time, present-time, and future time, giving credence to when the government or the officials would eventually respond or give update of the situation. The past time is portrayed in the material process, the actor, IDC, the 'President's secretary,' who speaks for the 'President,' as revealed conceptually explicated in the reference pronoun, 'they,' which is the actor of the main clause, also in the behavioural process. Reference to the past, that is, past time, is evident, using interrogative pronoun, 'when,' and adverbial of time, 'last check,' while reference to the present, that is, present time, is marked by adverbial, 'this time.' This also acts as real time (RT). Reference to the future, that is, future time, is marked using verbal phrase, 'are still waiting,' the noun, 'update,' and the adjective, 'again.' These are represented as scope in the material process of the subordinate clause. The implication of this is to give the implicit meaning that if there is going to be any 'update,' let alone response from the government, it will be extremely late, because of the margin situation of the local community. This is axiologically represented in excerpt (ii).

Excerpts

iii. ... the Federal Government, through the National Emergency Management Agency, is here to present relief materials to the affected persons... **(TV CONT. 04)**

iv. We have brought quite a lot of things here that runs (Sic) into millions. We have brought thousands of matrasses, and thousands of iron sheets; we have brought cement, in thousands, we have brought wrappers in thousands... **(TV CONT. 04)**

In excerpt (iii), the behavioural process is sequenced with a subsequent material process in the infinitival phrase, first, for the purpose of legitimisation, in this case, scoring political points, and second, to signify presence. This is further reinforced by the naming of the political agent, the institutions of government as the IDC. There is explicit axiological space established between the two agents in the IDC. The first, the government, is not at the scene, while the IDC at the scene, claims to be acting in its stead, legitimising its setup by the government, and reinforcing, explicitly that it is performing its function to the ODC, which is 'the affected persons.' The goal in the infinitival phrase, 'relief material', avers to short-time response to disasters and seeking to gain commendation from the ODC. Reference is made to the spaciotemporal adverb, 'here', marking presence in the IDC; giving the impression of swift response.

Excerpt (iv) is a direct statement, providing a reference to the IDC in excerpt (ii). The inclusive (first-person) pronoun, 'we,' there is implicit axiological evidence that the agent in the IDC is still attributing every response to the government, to elicit credit for it. The material process that dominates the anaphora simply downplays the ODC, as they are not stated at all. What is emphasised is the goal in the material process, with conscious repetition of the IDC. RT is conceptually represented in the interface between the past, 'have brought,' and the present, represented in the auxiliary, 'is,' in excerpt (ii). This proximises the period of going to government to mobilise the materials and showing up at the ODC to respond to the peoples' outcry. With respect to temporal, all the materials stated in the goal, indicate what the IDC think would solve the ODC's short term needs, which would not necessarily solve their perennial problem of flooding in the long term, which implicitly marks future time (FT).

Defining agency response

Another level of proximisation news report is to define the role of governmental agencies in managing ensuing disasters. In this case, the media or agencies define respective responsibilities with respect to responding or managing such disasters. The IDC in this case, which is always the political and social agents, is defined in role relations with stipulated temporal. This is also reported within RT and CT. Axiologically, political – agencies' responses to disasters are in reference to conceptual past, present and future temporal. There are also cases of axiological-spatial proximisation, in this case, to report performance of assigned roles. The following excerpts exemplify these representations.

Excerpts

v.   In August of 2012, the Nigerian Metrological Agency predicted heavy rains for that year warning local authorities and residents to keep drainage ditches clear. But warnings were either ignored or not taken seriously. In July 2016, the Nigerian Hydrological Agency released its annual flood outlook for the year, and the projections did not look good for most metropolitan areas of the country... **(CHNLSTV.02)**

vi. The Nigerian Metrological Agency, on its part, advise governments, communities, and individuals in these vulnerable parts of the country to take proactive actions such as cleaning water channels, drainage and avoid activities that would block the free flow of water. It also urged Nigerians to pay closer attention to its daily weather forecasts and alerts, further advised that relevant agencies should put forth their emergency evacuation plans and activate them as soon as necessary... **(CHNLSTV.03)**

Excerpts (v) and (vi) show area of 'responsibilisation', with respect to defining agency's response. The IDCs, agencies, 'the Metrological Agency,' and the 'Hydrological Agency' proximise their responsibilities

in terms of disasters. First, both IDCs distance themselves and shield themselves from the cause of disasters. There is an implicit-axiological proximisation that they have done everything to avert – avoid disasters. This is represented in the verbal process introducing excerpt (v). It ignores the fact that the verbiage, 'heavy rains,' which it predicts may not necessarily lead to disasters. In this case, since it did, the ODC, which is 'the local authorities and residents' are blamed. 'Local Authorities' in the ODC is de-emphasised, since they are not mentioned, while the residents, who are the victims, are emphasised axiologically as the blame agents. The temporal, August 2012, and 'July 2016' are conceptual past time (CT), which are mapped with the IDCs and are referenced using demonstrative pronouns + adverb, 'that year' and definite article + year, 'the year'. The essence of the IDCs, in temporal relations, is to substantiate their defined roles, and claim performance of them before the disasters.

In excerpt (vi) the ODC is explicitly held accountable for the cause of disasters. The ODC, which is geopolitically marked, is marked as a disaster-prone area, using the adjective 'vulnerable.' The ODCs here include the Government (political), and the communities (geological). The implicature is that every local community must have influence of government, or even its own constituted government, even if it is pseudo. The behavioural process is used to assert the factors that prevent or cause disasters. This is emphasised as the behaved, which is also functionally mapped into the ODC. There is a clear definition of role; that is, clear distance between role relations between the IDC and the ODC. The job of prediction and 'forecast' is adopted by the former (the IDC), while the role of protecting and managing the ecosystem is passed to the latter (the ODC).

Excerpts

vii. The state government is however making food and drug available for victims in affected areas. This is not the first-

time residents of these areas are experiencing flooding and while state and federal government provide food and temporary shelter, perhaps this is the best time to seek and ensure a permanent solution to such devasting floods... **(CHNLSTV03)**

viii. We want government to find particular place... to build houses for us... **(CHNLSTV03)**

The two excerpts above create a disparity between the defined roles of the IDC, in this case the government. In other words, the excerpts portray, axiologically, that there is a conscious or unconscious neglect of what the IDC is supposed to do in the CT, excerpt (viii), from what they are doing in the RT, in excerpt (vii). Axiologically, the ODC, 'the victims,' are dangling between two indispensable needs; getting 'food and 'drug' on the one hand and securing a new 'place' to live in, that is 'build houses,' on the other hand. Both are represented as the goal in their respective material processes. The IDC in the second clause posits a CT of frequency in the existential process (clause). This foregrounds what the most significant role of the IDC should be. Since the community suffers flooding at every RT, the goal in the existent, 'permanent solution,' becomes necessary, even though it is de-emphasised in the ODC. Rather, the role of providing 'food,' is made primary by the IDC for the purpose of scoring points, as discussed above. The IDC in excerpt (viii) bridges the gap between the victims, who are also citizens of the nation, and 'government.' Axiologically, this implies that, in terms of role relation, the two IDCs should not be distant from each other. A good government must not be far from the citizens, especially those who are in distress, who are suffering the effects of ecological disasters.

Bureaucratising role relations

Bureaucratising role implies shifting responsibilities from one agent that is responsible to another. Disaster responses are clearly defined between and among political and social agents, which are stipulated in the IDCs. However, in extreme situations, roles are often shifted back and forth between IDCs, while in many other cases, they are transferred to the ODCs. When roles are transferred back-and-forth, there is conflict about who performs assignments either portrayed in the IDCs or moved to the ODCs. This may further lead to delay in the performance of those actions, or even failure to perform the task of responding to the disasters. Roles themselves could be bureaucratised in the framework of CT-before incidents, and RT-present. The implication is that there are roles that are designated to be performed before disasters occur (CT-before), and roles that should be performed during disasters (RT-present). Following this circle of responsibilities makes it possible to mitigate local community disasters. The following excerpts affirm these points.

Excerpts

ix. We're trying to devise a strategy and we are trying to look at all of the issues, the costing and all that. This has to be a collaboration between the federal government, the state government, and the local government or so... **(TVCONT.5)**

x. Because government is not doing what government is supposed to do. I don't think urban plans are the challenge we actually have. I think it is making sure that people adhere to this urban plans, and then sanctioning those who go against the laws that we have... We have not seen disaster coming, and we have time to plan for it, but we are not. **(TVCONT.6)**

The IDC in Excerpt (ix) avers that bureaucratising role is incredibly important in terms of disasters. There are so many necessities, which begin at CT before the RT; that is, the time when disasters occur. The first is to 'devise' strategy, which acts as the behaved, in the behavioural process. The behaver, the contracted pronoun, 'we're,' which heads the IDC, is axiological to the disaster management agency. As established above, the bureaucratic role claimed or adopted by these agencies is to predict or forecast disasters. They make this role seem so complicated in the ODC, since it involves 'costing,' which requires 'government' funding. This is transferred to the IDC in the second existential process, in the second clause. The implication is that the first IDC, the agencies, claim responsibility for the events in the CT-before disasters, and push the responsibility of responding in the RT-present, because it requires funding, to the government. Axiologically, there is a high probability that disaster response is a capital-intensive project. Therefore, there must be cooperation between governmental agencies that are represented in the IDC.

There is so much bureaucracy of role relations, and sometimes they fail to do the right thing. The negative material process axiologically creates a difference between the IDCs. The 'government,' in this case is presented as being either irresponsible to their duty, or consciously passing the role to others, for political interest, as shown in previous sections. The mental process is used in the subsequent clauses. Each sensed aspect of the clause portrays IDCs that affect disasters in the future CT. These are 'urban planning,' which is necessary because of overboard urbanisation, causing climate change, making people to 'adhere' to the 'plan' and then 'sanctioning' people who do not obey the climate change 'law.' Before disasters happen in RT, there is axiological evidence that IDCs have the time to prepare but they are transferred to the ODCs to evade responsibilities or focus on other

irrelevant ones, which intensifies the possibility of suffering from disasters in the RT.

Social responsibilisation

Social responsibilisation here entails the people who are affected by disasters yet are putting up heroic acts to respond or manage the disaster. In these cases, acts of heroism and social agents are represented as the IDCs. The political agents represented in the IDCs are blamed or accused of negligence, while social agents responding to disasters in the IDCs are valourised or praised for personal and corporate response to disasters, which are often in the ODCs. Two significant social responses are exemplified and discussed in this section. These are heroic response and collective response.

Excerpts:

> xi. It was <u>neighbours</u> who came and constructed a local boat, kind of floating jerrican to pull them out to the land... **(TVCONT. 5)**
>
> xii. The villagers put some drums here... **(TV CONT. 4)**
>
> xiii. ...a crane truck arrives to evacuate the trapped vehicle. This removal is funded by the residents... *As soon as t*he car is removed, the search for the two occupants of the vehicle continues... **(TV CONT. 05)**

Excerpt (xi) indicates the heroic intervention of 'neighbours,' who are marked in the IDC as the identified participant, in the relational-identifying process. The IDC here is foregrounded using an embedded relative clause, identifying in the innate material process, the action of heroism. This is the construction of a 'local boat' in the ODC. The ODC also foregrounds local invention, in this case indigenous initiative in the management of disasters. This can also be done through improvisation. In excerpt (xii), there is collective response, by the IDC, the villagers, who are the victims of the disasters. In (xi), the CT is past,

indicating that post-disaster response, but in (xii), there is the interface between CT-before and RT. The 'drums' are put as disaster prevention strategies, but the axiological implicature in the ODC marks an insufficient response. Obviously, what the IDC, the 'villagers', could do was grossly insufficient to deal with the problem in the RT. In excerpt (xiii), the IDC is focused on the act of heroism, which is facilitated collectively by on-lookers. Events in the IDCs are the 'removal,' and the 'search' for victims, while the ODCs are represented as the 'trapped vehicles' and 'the occupants.' 'Residents' is also, mildly, treated as IDC, being that it is the actor of the material process, which has undergone transformation. The action in the last clause is marked in CT and RT mapping. CT is mapped to the RT. The search, which is in the behavioural process, could only be done after the car in the ODC had been removed.

Excerpt

> xiv. ... We were able to rescue three people in the Acura car, which they were posting yesterday; they were alive... we keep telling them that there is another car under that Acura, that they should try and do something... not until around four or five, we saw the car... we've been trying our best... **(TV CONT. 05)**

The excerpt above shows the collective response of community members, belonging to the IDCs, as portrayed by the collective pronoun, 'we.' Next in the IDCs are the victims, represented by 'people.' The first IDC's collective-heroic response was instrumental to the safety of life of the second. There is repetition of the IDC in the other structures. The IDCs are captured, using reference pronoun, and CT-past, 'yesterday.' However, the temporal, despite being in the ODC portrays a significant timeline, which defines the predicament of the other IDCs that had not been rescued, either by the precedent IDC or the ODC, 'them,' the management agency. There are two axiological

implicatures marked in the IDC bearing the phrase, 'another car under.' First, it signifies the intensity of the flood, submerging a vehicle to the extent that it could not be visibly seen; and second, it makes it difficult to predict the condition of the ODC, which is the driver and passengers. The verbal process is used in the second clause, where the sayer, 'we,' and the addressee, 'them,' representing the management agency that appeared at the scene, are IDCs. The verbiage, which contains the ODC, marks the defiance of the agency to conduct a satisfactory response. This is further reflected in the behavioural process. The management agency is urged to 'try and do something,' signifying, also the lack of effort. The latter part of the excerpt confirms the failure of the ODC to respond. The IDCs come back to rescue about twenty-four hours later. These RT and CT are belated responses and are at the expense of the victims, who would have been rescued at the past time, which is represented by the temporal, 'yesterday.'

5.1   Conclusion

The analyses show that proximisation in news reports is channelled to both political and social agents. Political agents at the interplay of disasters are the government and management agencies. The latter, as we have seen, include the Meteorological Agency, and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). These are represented as the IDCs in various clause structures or environments. Political IDCs engage in legitimising their offices by appealing to personal praise and gratification. To do this, they reach out to victims and distribute petty materials to the victims of disasters to attract their encomiums and personal approval. There are two terminal management strategies that could be adopted in terms of disasters; these are in the CTs (Construed Time), in the short-term and long-term. In legitimisation, political agents embrace the CT short-term. In this case, the substances in the IDCs provided are food materials, without doing

any other thing to solve the problem in the CT long-term. Sometimes they respond swiftly, while sometimes they delay. In many cases when rescue is needed, the IDC governmental agencies do not respond at all, and the victims are left to organise for their own rescue or survival.

Political agents in IDCs also engage in tossing their roles around. There are roles designated and performed before disasters occur (CT-before), while some are designated during disasters (RT-present). However, social agents in the IDCs perform more in the RT. There are axiological IDCs centred on disaster management agencies, claiming responsibility for events in the CT-before, and pushing the responsibility in the RT-present to other agents, especially social agents. In another pedestal, axiologically, these roles are clearly defined to set boundaries, proximising. The IDCs define roles to distance themselves from blame when disasters and consequences happen. IDC roles are transferred to social agents who act, in most cases, corporately. Social agents in the IDCs are valourised for heroic responses and rescue efforts to victims in the ODC.

In conclusion, proximisation and legitimisation is a factor of three conceptual time, before, present and future. These are marked in the CTs and RTs (Real Time) where roles are proximised or (de)legitimised. The media, using the material, behavioural, verbal, existential and relational processes, report disaster events, specifically to show political and social proximisation and legitimisation or delegitimisation.

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