

A DISCOURSE-STYLISTIC PERSPECTIVE OF YERIMA'S *PARI* AND THE SPATES OF GRAND CORRUPTION: AN IMPLICATION FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

This study, from a discourse-stylistic perspective, examines Ahmed Yerima's *Pari* and the spates of grand corruption in Nigeria. Through the prism of a Northern Nigerian family thrown into utter despair by the loss of their only daughter due to the Boko Haram insurrection; the study, first, examines how the world of the discourse prioritizes this theme through information structures. Second, it attempts to unveil the linguistic features used in achieving this. Findings unveil that mood, modality, and transitivity amongst other choices contribute to the entire conceptual construction and interpretative impressions of the discourse. While probing and leading interrogatives are used in the text as structural information to direct readers' attention to the insurgency and the conspiracy of silence; declarative is employed to categorically expose these phenomena as spates of grand corruption through diverse processes that are informatively and thematically driven. With this, readers' cognition becomes deepened concerning the complicity of the government in the entire phenomenon. The study intends to enrich not only readers' perception of the problems but how the discourse tends to address them.

Keywords: Discourse-stylistic perspective, Boko Haram Insurrection, Conspiracy of Silence, Grand Corruption.

Introduction

Corruption is a disturbing phenomenon, especially in a system where, according to Znoj (2009), it has become *the rule* rather than *the exception*. Corruption means all sorts of despicable practices such as

bribery, embezzlement, treachery, subjugation and so on. It has been described as practices undertaken by a person or an institution entrusted with a position of authority in the quest for illicit benefits. The act can occur at different echelons and one of its pervasive forms is *insurgency and conspiracy* as this study from a discourse-stylistic perspective tries to describe through the prism of Yerima's *Pari*. Insurgency and conspiracy have been classified in this study as grand corruption. *Elliott (1997) describes* grand corruption as that which affects not only the government on a large scale but also the structure of society. It is a type of corruption at the level of government where power is abused by some political class who subvert the entire system for selfish gain because of their status.

The fight for booty in Nigeria is often fierce. What one finds in *Pari*, via the language of the participants, is a conflict of interests where the diverse interests of people in power clash with the primary purpose of the entire system. A prototypical example of such a despicable subversion is the Boko Haram Insurgency, which is entwined with the conspiracy of silence as this study tries to disclose. Taking into consideration the complicity of the government in this kind of grand corruption, one comes to comprehend that the country is at war with itself (Edem, 2021).

While activities such as corruption and insurgency are seen as recurrent issues in Yerima's *Pari*, it is also evident that religious bigotry, unemployment and poverty are catalysts or triggering devices readily apparent in accomplishing insurgency and conspiracy in the system. Different scholars have offered diverse interpretations on why all this is happening. For some, there is a systemic force at work; consequently, the solution will be to adopt policies that will assist in curbing the problems. Looking at the dynamics of the turmoil, Muzan (2014, p. 218) contends that policy choices will certainly dictate whether Nigeria can survive as a state or fail and splinter into fledgling micro-mini states.

The sudden emergence of the *Jama'atu Ahlil Sunna Lidawati wal Jihad* consortium (Boko Haram— meaning 'Western education is sinful') in Nigeria is inexplicable. The havoc wrought so far by the

group has been classified as the profanest insurrection that has ever plagued the country since the inception of the Nigerian nation. The sect has been characterized as the greatest threat to Nigeria's peaceful co-existence and territorial integrity since the 1967-1970 conflict. They are also connoisseurs in massive raiding and kidnappings (Edem, 2021). The kidnap in Chibok on April 14, 2014, as Yerima's *Pari* unveils, as well as in Dapchi, Yobe State on the 19th February 2018 illustrate the cases in point; thus, the need for effective policy and legislation to regulate this course.

The problem of Boko Haram would not have escalated into a legitimized business if the government had appropriate policies in place. The former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, in an interview extracted online from *The Punch*, October 20, 2018, remarked that the Boko Haram crisis would not have degenerated into what it is today, had his successor, late Umaru Yar'dua, managed the issue properly after he (Obasanjo) left office in 2007. According to President Obasanjo,

With the permission of former President Goodluck Jonathan in 2011, I visited the family of Boko Haram founder, Mohammed Yusuf and other aggrieved persons in the terrorist group to enquire why they carried out attacks and what their grievances were.... And they through their intermediary said they were there during my government and I didn't disturb them so they didn't disturb me. They were preaching Sharia and that was what they wanted. But according to them, when I left the government, they were being chased and haunted and they lost a number of their adherents they decided to fight back and even the leader of their sect, Mohammed Yusuf, was killed and his in-law was also killed. They went to court to try and get compensation which was granted to them but the state government didn't pay." (Akinkuotu, 2018)

What gave rise to this discontent is the opposition to the right to claims. The government's refusal to compensate them according to the court order created a loophole for the subversion by the political class in the government.

A Brief Summary of *Pari*

Ahmed Yerma's *Pari* revolves around Hyelapari, one of the Chibok girls kidnapped by the Islamic extremists, Boko Haram, in 2014 who returns home, having had a child for a member of the sect called Ibrahim. The text commences with Ama, a desperate Christian mother who switches to Islam in a bit to advance her daughter's return. While observing an oblation, the husband, Tada, comes in and on seeing her frightens with shock. This new development does not go down well with Tada whose concern is about what the reactions of members of the church will be should they discover the wife's sudden change from Christianity to Islam. Not too long, some members of the church arrive for a prayer meeting bringing with them demoralizing news on the spate of attacks on members of the church in Mubi and Uba provinces by Boko Haram. They narrate how the churches were burnt as well as the massacre of members, including Reverend John, Tada's little cousin, for refusing to say their Fatiha.

Ama, in her usual quest, invites Shaagu, a witch doctor, through her sister Cheche to unravel a dream she has and to uncover what the future holds for her concerning her kidnapped daughter. Through a magic mirror, Shaagu foretells her daughter's return. Shaagu however says that when Ama's daughter returns, Ama should be careful not to allow the joy of her heart to intersperse with the thought of her pain. The remark accentuates the writer's ideology of a restorative approach as conceivable means of stemming the surge of insurgency. All of a sudden, Pari returns with a baby in her hand accompanied by the new Local Government Chairman, the soldier and the police. On seeing Pari, Ama and Tada are overwhelmed with joy.

Tada, having listened to the sad narratives from his daughter Pari, ranging from the carting away of the girls in the hostels, the sufferings, the forced marriages and how she escaped from the Sambisa forest, decides to get medicines for her in a nearby pharmacy only to come back with a young man who undrapes himself as Ibrahim, the husband of Pari and a member of the sect. While Pari is delighted to see Ibrahim, Ama is enraged seeing him. Ibrahim narrates how frustration

pushed him into the group. With this, Ama is left with no choice but to let go of her anger toward Ibrahim.

Methodology

Eight excerpts were purposively selected and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) was deployed as an analytical model. Through the linguistic choices of mood, modality, and transitivity among other choices, the approach was to determine how the information structures of the text articulate meanings; disclosing the complicity of the government in the current insurrection plaguing the Nigerian nation. By information structures, the study infers how the characters or speakers in the text organise their messages to enhance readers' comprehension of the subterfuge of the government. Information structures comprise constituents represented as *Given* and *New*. The *Given* is earmarked as elements of shared or mutual information that a speaker brings to the attention of the hearer while the *New* is the information allotted as the focus of the speaker's message that the speaker wants the hearer to know. To further enhance the comprehension of the terms, the study uses tables, bold ink, italicisation as well as underlining to indicate the differences between these linguistic terms. The study also uses bold ink to signal verbs that instantiate different processes within the information structures.

Theoretical Model

This study employs Halliday's SFL as an analytical tool for the analysis of eight excerpts. To Halliday (1978:112), SFL describes how an event is encoded in language through three metafunctions or linguistic features that initiate the creation of diverse meanings in discourse. These linguistic features, which range from the *ideational* to the *interpersonal* and the *textual* are semantically connected to three contextual variables such as *field*, *tenor* and *mode* respectively. The ideational relates to the field of discourse and conveys a text or clause as experience (experiential meaning) and the sequences of experiences (logical meanings). The interpersonal relates to the tenor and conveys

a text or clause as an exchange. Finally, the textual is concerned with the mode, which indicates how the text or clause is patterned into a meaningful text or as a message via context. However, the interest of the study is to show, via information structures, how the *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual* meta-functions as linguistic choices entwined in the discourse to uncover insurgency and conspiracy as manifestations of grand corruption in Nigeria.

Analysis and Discussion

Understanding the construction of issues necessitates one's contributions to solutions as well as the policy making process. Yerima's *Pari* presents issues that ground this proposition. To this end, the world of the discourse, the events, and states as well as the participants involved are described and comprehended via significant structures. This implies that the events, characters and language are not mere art but are narratives for the record to proffer solutions to the scheming or devious crime of insurgency and corruption against the Nigerian nation.

Excerpt 1:

TADA: And the government? They deny knowing about you. The former local government chairman says you even killed four of his brothers.

IBRAHIM: Did he really say that? Well, this is a different story from what really happened. The irony is that they created us, nurtured us for their own good at first ... and after, they dumped us. Where did we get the arms? Where? From them, the military and black market. Where did we get the money we spend? Who fuelled our anger? Who? See how well they lie now that they do not know how to quench the fire they selfishly lit. Pity (Yerima, 2016. p. 48)

From the conversational turns in excerpt 1, the reader, through the information structures is led to significant information on the present insurrection bedevilling the Nigerian nation. According to

Bloor and Bloor (2004), a significant aspect of functional grammar is the manner information is arranged in communication. Three things capture our interest in the conversation. First, the way the interrogative mood structures deployed by both speakers advance the information structures thematically. The exchange shows that some probing type questions in a discourse can serve to elicit the required information as well as situate readers within the theme of discourse like the one used by Tada, ~“and the government?”, while some of the probing type questions deployed by Ibrahim such as “Where did we get the arms?”, “Where?”, etc. are *leading types* premeditated as *topical themes* to pilot both the seeker of the information and readers to New information characterized by undisclosed truth encircling the insurgency in Northern Nigeria.

Second is the way the declarative mood structures employed by Tada are patterned as content clauses to report or convey a question that invites the addressee or informant to confirm an assumption/subject matter or to clarify it; and, third, is the categorical assertiveness of the mood structures invented by Ibrahim to prioritize certain salient information or as engines of exposition for the consumption of the first speaker and readers. The mood structures are invested to prioritize certain salient information structures in the discourse. Information structure necessitates how speakers arrange the information in their discourse or message. This implies that in every message, there is the **Given** and **New** information. The shared message is usually termed as the **Given** information, while the additional information which is the focus of the speaker's message is referred to as the **New** information. It then follows that structures such as ‘the government?’, ‘they’, and ‘The former local government chairman’ used by the first speaker are themes that are linearly patterned; featuring related **Given** elements. The pronoun ‘they’ and the nominal group~ ‘The former local government chairman’ are referents to ‘the government’.

The interrogative ~‘and the government?’ is utilized as a device, first to establish the area of mutual knowledge; and, second, to elicit information. The **New** information appears in the second part of the

clauses. These are: ‘*deny knowing about you*’, and ‘*even killed four of his brothers*’. The **New** information seemed eccentric or strange to the second speaker and his response resonates this in the context—‘*Did he really say that?*’ Here, the Finite and the Subject constitute the **theme**; as such, foregrounding the speaker’s discontent over what was said. To heighten this discontent, and to furnish readers with **New** information as additional knowledge to the **Given**; first, he uses linguistic *opposition* or *contrast* to signal his area of focus which is the Rheme. This is further represented diagrammatically below:

(a) ‘Well, this is *a different story from what really happened*’

Given		New
Well	This	<i>is a different story from what really happened</i>
Interpersonal theme	Topical Theme	Rheme

(b) ‘See how well they *lie now* that they *do not know how to quench the fire they selfishly lit*’.

Given		New
See how well	They	<i>lie now</i>
	that they	<i>do not know how to quench the fire they selfishly lit</i>
Interpersonal theme	Topical Theme	Rheme

In context ‘b’ ‘*quench*’ and ‘*lit*’ are mutually exclusive terms that indicate what the speaker perceives as the height of deception, callousness and selfishness by those in power occasioned by the struggle for booty, especially on a serious issue such as insurgency. Second, the utilization of material process verbs by the second speaker is revealing (both in the interrogative and declarative structures). The essence is to

demonstrate the government's collusion in the entire problem. The declarative mood structures are devised as categorical assertions/declarations that express the fact or reality of the situation. This is represented below:

['The irony is that] they *created us*, *nurtured us* for their own good at firstand after, they *dumped us*.'

At the level of transitivity choices, the persuasiveness of the content is heightened as the verbal elements are given priority since the **New** information is meant for the listener's or reader's insights. The prioritized elements which are in the position of the **Rheme** showcase the strategic portrayal of acts and character behaviours substantiated by the complicity or collusion of two participants in the entire ruse – the government and the sect. The schema below conveys the government as the driving force or initiator of the entire grand conspiracy.

Given	New	
They	<i>created</i>	<i>us</i>
[[ϕ] a covert subject]	<i>nurtured</i>	<i>us</i>
[Unmarked Theme]	Rheme	
and after, they	<i>dumped</i>	<i>us</i>
[Marked Theme]	Rheme	
Actor	Material Process	Goal

With this, the transitivity choices in addition to the thematic pattern become a trajectory or an information structure that furnishes one with knowledge of the complexity of the whole crisis. The way the information structure is intentionally configured in the discourse may have an ideological impact on the reader. With it, the reader becomes abreast with the whole subterfuge and grand conspiracy grounded by the silence of those in public power. The effect of the entire discourse

is that readers may begin to nurse serious preconceptions against such a government or system that misuses power for private gain.

Third, how linguistic equivalence is deployed as categorical assertion or affirmation to the foregrounded leading interrogatives such as ‘Where did we get the arms?’, ‘Where?’, ‘Where did we get the money we spend?’ and ‘Who fuelled our anger?’ to disclose the impunity surrounding the insurrection. In that event, leading interrogatives become *topical themes* expended to lead the listener or the reader to salient information considered to be New. This **New** information is achieved by linguistic equivalence characterized by apposition in— ‘*From them, the military and black market*’. This equivalence intensifies our knowledge of the subterfuge of the government in the insurgency. The prepositional group ~ ‘*From them*’ is equated with the nominal group ~ ‘*the military and black market*’ to give us more detail about the referent ‘*them*’. They become categorical assertions or affirmations to the leading interrogatives. It has a lot of ideological influence; one of which could be from a cognitive perspective, where readers begin to perceive the citizenry as victims caught in this web of deception because those who are assumed to protect their lives and property now trade with them. The linguistic equivalence, at some level, obliterates ambiguity from the full argument. The stylistic effect is perhaps to scare the readers or persuade them to take a certain course of action.

Lastly, the fourth is the attention the word ‘*pity*’ used by the speaker in the context is construed to gain from readers. No doubt, the lexical item is disturbing as it implicitly divulges the speaker’s disappointment towards such a grand conspiracy.

In excerpt 2 below, one gets to comprehend the nonchalance of the government as well as other stakeholders involved in the whole deception through the information structures. The conversation is triggered by an interrogative that elicits further information from the first speaker (Kalagu). Through Ama’s exchange, we get to know the information that is emphasized or prioritized.

Excerpt 2:

KALAGU: I want to see the mother of this house. We received a paper from Chibok Local Government that your daughter Hyelapari Shettima was one of the girls kidnapped... on the night of April 14th 2014. Is it true?

AMA: Yes. I am Agnes Shettima. My husband is Deacon Jacob Shettima. Our daughter whose name you just called has been missing for two years. And your government has done nothing about it. The last local government chairman was useless to our cause. He played with our matter until he was removed disgracefully from office. His wife was a bigger clown. She invited all of us ... in order to share blood money to us...We hear ... even some who do not know how we feel, who never stepped one foot here, afraid of being kidnapped, go all over the world taking photographs and begging for money in the name of our daughters. I swear ...they will not live to enjoy the blood money they had made through the false search of our children. (Yerima, 2016. p. 29- 30)

Through prioritization, attention is drawn to certain information that is considerably **New** as against the less salient ones as underlined in the discourse. As a result of spearheading this **New** information, one finds Ama using naming and describing as linguistic tools to inevitably identify, equate or metaphorize those involved in the ploy in a certain perspective. For example ‘The last local government chairman *was useless to our cause*’ and ‘His wife *was a bigger clown*’ amongst others are stylistically significant as they reveal the prejudices of the speaker against the government and other stakeholders involved in the insurrection. These expressions that reveal the speaker’s prejudices also influence the reader's cognitive view of the people being referred to. See the illustration via the tabulated diagram indicating some of the **Given** and **New** information.

S/N	Given		New	Process Type
1	Yes	I	<i>am</i> Agnes Shettima	Relational Process
2		My husband	<i>is</i> Deacon Jacob Shettima	Relational Process
3		Our daughter whose name you just called	<i>has been missing</i> for two years	Existential Process
4		And your government	<i>has done</i> nothing about it	Behavioural Process
5		The last local government chairman	<i>was</i> useless to our cause	Relational Process
6		He	<i>played</i> with our matters	Material Process
7		Until he [Marked Theme]	<i>was removed</i> disgracefully from office	Material Process
8		His wife	<i>was</i> a bigger clown	Relational Process
9		She invited all of us	in order to share blood money	Material Process
10		We hear	even some who do not know how we feel, who never stepped one foot here, afraid of being kidnapped, go all over the world taking photographs and begging for money in the name of our daughters	Mental Process
11		I swear ... they	will not live to enjoy the blood money [they] had made through the false search of our children	Behavioural Process
	Textual theme	Topical theme	<i>Rheme</i>	

The summation of the entire discourse is on nonchalance. The fact that the daughter in question has been missing is beside the point. But for the government not to have shown concern for two years shows the height of callousness on one hand. On the other hand, it foregrounds the new spate of institutional corruption where some individuals take undue advantage of the uncanny situation. This is represented as an index that worsens the state of affairs by serial numbers 10 and 11. A close study of the exchange indicates information structures augmented by transitivity choices of different patterns that substantiate the prejudices of the speaker. The effect is that it may colour the reader's view of the people referred to.

Excerpt 3:

AMA: ...you need have seen how she drove the government officials out. She kept screaming. 'Go and bring back the rest of us. Give them what they want and bring them home. The girls are dying each day'. Then in one sweep, she ran to the kitchen, carried the pestle and drove even the chairman out. (Yerma, 2016. p. 34)

In excerpt 3, readers' cognition concerning the complicity of the government in the present insurgency is reinforced in the exchange through imperative and declarative moods that report **New** information about the insurgency as a legitimized enterprise - a kind of corruption where someone somewhere is benefitting from the perfidy or deception as captured by imperative moods that foreground the state of affairs - (i) 'Go and bring back the rest' and (ii) 'Give them what they want'. The themes in '(i)' is realized by just a predicator while the theme in '(ii)' is realized by a predicator and a pronominal. While the Rheme as **New** information in '(i)' validates the existence of treachery, the Rheme or **New** information in '(ii)' establishes a presupposition that amplifies the treachery or perfidy.

Other **New** information characterized as Rheme that is revealing include (a) 'She *kept screaming*' portrayed by a verbal process

that is traumatic. (b) 'The girls *are dying each day*' represents a fear-provoking material process, drawing out attention to the reality of the situation -The belligerent effect of the entire situation on the victim is foregrounded by linguistic parallelism within material processes that showcase discontent- (c) '[she] *ran to the kitchen*', '*carried the pestle*' and '*drove even the chairman out*'.

The main function of any linguistic enterprise is to examine the social function of language. Halliday, (1985) asserts that language can be examined through the recognition of meanings inherent in the social system. A significant aspect of meaning worth examining in any discourse via linguistic processes is ideology. In the light of this, item '(c)', could be ideologically driven. The ideological impact could be to portray the government as grossly irresponsible, and the '*act of driving*' is instantiated to cynically illustrate how this gross irresponsibility is frowned at.

Excerpt 4:

AMA... Let us hand him over to the police.

TADA: NO! They will kill him. You remember the first who returned. The police took her man. Although, they said it was to have a chat with him. But no one person has heard of him. They said it was to protect him. (Yerima, 2016. p.54)

In excerpt 4, through the modal '*will*', we see an ideology predicated by insularity or prejudice against the police and their collusion in the present insurrection. The modal verb permits the speaker to hypothesize or posit a future event of something threatening; hence, furnishing us with **New** information. The implication of this is that no security official is reliable anymore because of their involvement in the insurrection. The same applies to the military as unfurls in excerpt 1. In an idyllic context, Ibrahim, a member of the Boko Haram sect should have been handed over to the police but the choice of modality by Tada negates this because he envisages an unpalatable consequence should such be done as captured in '**NO! They *will kill him***'. The textual theme 'No' strengthens this refusal.

Modality in this sense becomes a linguistic choice to hypothesize certain possibilities of impending danger and warning. The usage embeds in the mind of readers some scary effects and prejudices against the police force as government accomplices in the present insurrection in Northern Nigeria. While the modality, on one hand, becomes **New** information that substantiates the logic behind the refusal of Ama's suggestion as indicated in (1) 'NO! They *will kill him*; the moods, on the other hand, become devices for modifying the refusal via an earlier mistake done as represented in (2) 'You remember *the first who returned*' and (3) 'The police *took her man*'. The New information / Rheme has been italicized and underlined to show how impacting and persuasive they can be to the reader.

In excerpt 5 below, the prejudice against the security's architecture is amplified. Rather than turn in the potential informant to the police, they solicit a way out for his safety as exemplified by a conditional clause that incorporates modal auxiliary which shows that what is being conveyed is a matter of possibility. The context further intensifies their misgiving about the force. Such dimension of the exchange, in addition to mood, advances modality as potential for ideological impact. It also articulates a kind of restorative approach as depicted by moods such as 'We have *something to tell*' and 'My sister, kwecheche, *has found a way out for you*'. The new information underlined seems to articulate the position of the text. In addition to prejudice, they seem to portend signatures of restoration that are further intensified by the modal structure - '*heaven knows what will happen to you*'.

Excerpt 5:

AMA: ... We have something to tell you. My sister, kwecheche, has found a way out for you ... and us. If the police or army come for you, *heaven knows what will happen to you*. (Yerima, 2016. p. 62)

Excerpts 6, 7 and 8 are structured to ground the perspective of Yerima's *Pari* as a text for policy implementation because they

precipitate attention on some complicit factors that underlie institutional, political, and practical matters that can shape policy processes. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, and religious bigotry are areas of concern readily used to trigger insurgency as earlier mentioned in the introduction. As the economic situation of the country worsens, poverty and unemployment deepen. Subsequently, youths who are not profitably employed become tools in the hands of fundamentalists for accomplishing insurgency as well as other environmental crimes as captured in excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6:

IBRAHIM: It all started the night my mother was buried. I regretted her death more. I blamed myself for her death because it wasn't that I was away when she died. I was there useless... but I was just a dead person there. She needed food and medicine... and none was there within my reach...so I watched her...with tear-filled eyes, I watched life ebb out of her veins...and she was gone. After her burial, I tried to find a taste to my mouth My friend Zaki and Yakubu had begged me to join them.

TADA: Join who?

IBRAHIM: The jihad. The Sunna Lidda' Awah Wal-Jihad.

TADA: Boko Haram?

IBRAHIM: Yes. Young men living in hopelessness, angry at nothing in particular. All smoking and drinking.... (Yerma, 2016. p. 46)

The conversation in excerpt 6 begins with a piece of entirely **New** information that interests both the listener and the reader. The lexical item 'it' in the context is a pronoun whose implied antecedent is 'the recruitment exercise'. Consequently, the whole structure - '*It all started the night my mother was buried*' can be regarded as **New** information. Others are foregrounded by a sense of oppositions or

binaries. One significant way of achieving meaning in language is through a sense of binaries that equates or contrasts. Equating can take 'the form of synonyms as in (1) '*regretted*' and '*blamed*' represented in ~ 'I regretted her death more' and 'I blamed myself for her death'. The underlined propositions are considered **New** information because they acquaint us with the information of death as it affects the informant or first speaker as well as the behavioural disposition of the speaker due to the incident. They are also **New** because they are likely to elicit further questions on why the regret and blame. (2) '*useless*' and '*just a dead person*' signalled by 'I was there useless' and 'I was just a dead person there'. The relational processes establish the speaker's incapacitation due to poverty and unemployment. This incapacitation is further intensified in (3) where the structure '*life ebb out of her vein*' and '*was gone*' in 'I watched life ebb out of her vein' and 'she was gone' are synonymously used to convey the severity of poverty and unemployment on the speaker. In (4) The pronominal 'them', is a referent for '*Zaki and Yakubu*' as captured in 'My friends Zaki and Yakubu had begged me to join them', and co-referential to 'The jihad. The Sunna Lidda' *Awah Wal-Jihad*', '*Boko Haram*', '*Young men*' and 'All in Young men living in hopelessness. All Smoking and drinking'. With this, there exists a co-referential chain that grounds our cognitive perception of the discourse denoted in the following order:

'*Zaki and Yakubu*' > 'Them' > 'The jihad. The Sunna Lidda' *Awah Wal-Jihad.*' > '*Boko Haram*' > 'Young men' > All.

The co-referential information helps to shape our knowledge concerning the group and the ideology they stand for—the Jihad. As well as the status of the members in terms of age as indicated in the NGPs-- 'Young men living in hopelessness' and 'All Smoking and drinking'. The NGPs call for concern and doable policies intervention. They point to a level of decay that poverty and unemployment have on the nation. The decay is foregrounded in the interrelated synonyms '*hopelessness*' and 'Smoking and drinking'. The pronominal item 'All' in the second structure is not underlined because it is assumed as **Given** since the

synonym 'young men' has established for us a kind of common knowledge concerning the lexical item.

We also find cases of contrasting elements via antonyms in the discourse. They also shape our cognition of the subjects matter as represented in (5) 'away' and 'there' in the structure ~ 'it wasn't that I *was away*. I *was there*' and finally, antonyms foregrounded by substitution as exemplified in (6) 'food' and 'none' in 'She *needed food and medicine... and none was there within my reach*'. The structure showcases what poverty and unemployed can result in if not adequately handled. In other words, it can reduce mortality rates. Edem (2021) avers that one needs to know the characteristics of poverty to appreciate its intensity in the context as a social factor in the present insurrections disquieting the nation. Poverty, in a jiffy, can be inferred as a lack of command over basic consumption needs. From the discourse, one comprehends the concepts of poverty and unemployment to be disturbing because they are accentuated as excellent leeway to the ideas of fundamentalists. For instance, the only option left for the informant or Ibrahim due to lack of necessities is to join the Jihad or Boko Haram as indicated in the TRP declarative 'My friend Zaki and Yakubu had begged me to join them'.

Excerpt 7 below, with great concern, accentuates poverty, insecurity and corruption as a chain of occurrences. Clauses 1-3, implicitly render poverty as a scourge. Clauses 4- 5 embody a serious issue that touches on the security essence and clauses 6-8 unfold the aftermath and effect of these problems. By implication, the discourse or exchange brings to our frontier an ideology that leverages security, which points to security to lives, security to poverty, security to jobs, and security against exploitation and marginalization. Such ideology attempts to clamour for doable policies or legislation that will cater all the concepts. The discourse attempts to resituate the definition of the concept appropriately. The exchange below is illustrative.

Excerpt 7:**KALAGU:** I don't understand

AMA: Indeed poverty is a curse...I never liked that cheap school you know? But for my husband, it is cheap enough for his pocket. I wanted my only child to go to one of those schools where there is so much security; even the angels of God will struggle to enter. Not to that cheap dark school with dark environment, so that dark gun tottering souls can just drive in the dark of the night where children fall prey to them as animals... This country is dying... gradually, through corruption everywhere. I tell you, someone somewhere is benefitting from all this madness. And ... we the poor in soul and pockets, are the ones suffering for their greed. (Yerima, 2016, p.31)

We have attempted to extract structures of concern that unveil how the **New** information captures the chain of problems. The **New** attempts to point to momentous issues that are expressive or meaningful to the listeners. It connotatively foregrounds the severity of poverty, insecurity and corruption. The table below illustrates this.

S/N		Given	New	Process Types
1	Indeed	Poverty	<i>is a curse</i>	Relational Process – shows the attitude of the speaker to poverty
2		I never liked	<i>that cheap school</i>	Mental Process- that spites poverty
3		but for my husband [marked theme]	<i>it is cheap enough for his pocket</i>	Relational Process
4		I wanted my only child	<i>to go to one of those schools where there is so much security, even the angels of God will struggle to enter</i>	Mental Process (expressing modality of desire)
5		Not to that cheap dark school ... [marked theme]	<i>with dark environment, so that dark gun tottering souls can just drive in the dark of the night where children fall prey to them as animals</i>	Relational Process that articulates the marginalization gap between the rich and the poor
6		This country is	<i>dying ... gradually, through corruption everywhere</i>	Relational Process that points to corruption
7		I tell you,	<i>someone somewhere is benefitting from all this madness</i>	Verbal process that situates readers to the perfidy
8		And...we the poor [marked theme]	<i>in soul and pockets, are the ones suffering for their greed</i>	Relational Process that points the effect of conspiracy and corruption
	Inter-personal Theme	Topical Theme	Rheme	

The declarative mood structure by the first speaker is noteworthy because it elicits or provokes notable information characterized as **New** in the discourse context. The mood structure by the second speaker dubbed as '(1)' in the table brings to our purview the bane of poverty. From a cognitive perspective, one comprehends the severity of this problem via a relational process that equates it to a curse. Clauses 2 and 3 enhance our knowledge of why the speaker refers to the concept that way through *mental* and *relational* processes. The mood structure in item '(3)' should not be ignored because it attempts to redirect our attention to the problem of low-income earners; consequently, establishing the wide gap between the rich and the poor. Items '(4)' and '(5)' use opposition as a linguistic choice to bluntly point at poverty and insecurity as like problems. While '(4)' through a *mental process* deploys the verb 'want' to function as a modality that expresses the speaker's desire that something should be the case; '(5)' uses a *relational process* that negates such desire by pointing to poverty and insecurity as constraining factors to her heart desire. Therefore, lexical items such as 'cheap' and 'dark' foreground poverty and insecurity respectively. With this, a marginalization gap is accentuated. The focus is that national security is an essential aspect of human life and should be a national concern for policymakers. Onoja (2019, p.6), surmised that the absence of legislation and policy on security imperilled security in Nigeria. The right to security should be for all in society not just for the rich.

Also item '5' seems to convey insecurity as an intentional mechanism in the hands of those who fuel insurrection as phrased in- '*Not that cheap dark school with dark environment, so dark that gun tottering souls can just drive in trucks in darkness of the night...*'. The information seems to suggest the Chibok case as a planned act; thus, establishing the conspiracy as a grand corruption. While item '6' points to corruption as a disturbing phenomenon via a *relational process*; item '7' situates readers to the perfidy involved; hence, broadening our knowledge of the conspiracy and grand corruption. The verb 'tell' shows some measure of certainty, as such, inevitably, making the statement

modal and its cogency open to debate. Item '8' conveys the effect such conspiracy and grand corruption have on the poor masses. Some of the information structures in excerpt 8 contribute to our comprehension of religious bigotry as tenable means of polarizing the nation, and so, fuelling insurrection. The transaction below shows the level of politicization involved.

Text 8:

AMA: My daughter's name is Pari... Hyelapari.... She is a Christian girl.... Her Christian name is Ruth.

IBRAHIM: No, woman, please listen. She is a Muslim now. We forced them to first accept the faith. Ruth? May Allah forbid!

Here, equating and contrasting are seen as laudable linguistic choices used as an engine of religious debate. The debate has an ideological impact. In the discourse, ideologies are conceived as van Dijk (1994:1) puts it, "basic frameworks that organize social representations in the minds of social group members". From the excerpt, one comprehends 'attitude', 'membership', 'task', 'goal' etc. as features that shape the ideology of a sect or group. Attitude, for instance, in the discourse is perceived to play a functional role via the use of contrast represented by 'we' vs 'them' in—'We ***forced them to first accept the faith***, where the verbal group of the clause functions as **New** information, which intensifies or substantiate the task as well as the goal involved if such ideology must be achieved.

With that, religion is grounded as a phenomenon that prompts insurgency. While the *relational process* of the transitivity conveyed by Ama in 'My daughter's name ***is Pari***', 'She is ***a Christian girl***', and 'Her Christian name is ***Ruth***', is used as an equation to an argument that is informatively **New**; the *relational process* and *material process* deployed respectively by Ibrahim, on the other hand, is invested to contradict the argument 'She ***is a Muslim now***' and 'We ***forced them to first accept the faith***'. The level of subversion and the height of religious

intolerance are heightened in (i) Multiple themes negatively declared to indicate implacability as captured thus:

Given		New	
No	woman, please listen	She	is <i>a Muslim now</i>
Textual theme	Interpersonal theme	Topical theme	Rheme

(2) The interrogative that shows his repulsiveness in ‘Ruth?’ and (3) modality that marks detestation or abhorrence in ‘May Allah forbid!’

To further amplify religious colouration as an ideology of the fundamentalist in fuelling insurgency. The excerpt below by Ruth Maclean and Isaac Abrak March 21, 2018, in *The Guardian* reporting on the kidnapping of the students of Dapchi Girls School of Science and Technical College Yobe on the 19th of February 2018 will suffice:

“Dapchi is full of joy,” said Mohammed Mdada, who saw the girls being whipped as they were driven away a month previously. He said the militants apologized to some of the girls’ parents in their language, Kanuri, and shook their hands before driving off. They said that *if they knew they were Muslim girls they wouldn’t have abducted them*, Mdada said. They warned the girls that they should stay away from school and swore that if they came back and found any girl in school, they’d abduct them again and never give them back.

The ‘if’ clause highlighted in the excerpt seems to say it all. The entire narrative sums up the politics in religion as some deploy it for their selfish interest in destabilizing the nation rather than unifying it.

Conclusion

This paper has examined Yerima’s *Pari* from a discourse-stylistic perspective. Findings show that the texture of the discourse concerning insurgency and conspiracy as spates of grand corruption in Nigeria is

premised on information structures labelled in the study as Given and New respectively. They are deployed to reinforce the different social roles of the speakers or characters in the text. The analysis of selected texts reveals that New information against the Given information is earmarked as a significant structure for its expository function via the contextual import of mood, modality and transitivity among other linguistic features. While the Given information enhances the different patterns of the theme in the discourse, the New information tends to give readers a broader comprehension of the subterfuge of the government in the present insurrection plaguing the Nigerian nation. Also, findings in this study may be important to the drafting of doable legislative policies to regulate factors such as poverty, unemployment and religious bigotry project in the discourse as leeway to the ideas of fundamentalists in the sparking of insurgency. Consequently, if the government is serious in its fight against corruption, it should prioritize these factors by finding a lasting solution to them via doable policy drafting and implementation to encourage and enhance the accountability of high-level public officials and others whose corruption harm their citizens too often with impunity, see grand corruption as human rights crime that deserves adjudication and punishment accordingly, and give legal consequence to harm as well as act as a voice to those victimized.

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