

Representing Actions/Events/States in Pastor Sam Adeyemi's *Nigeria of My Dream*

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Abstract

Pastor Sam Adeyemi's growing influence in national discourse through written motivational texts marks an underexplored area for applied linguistic inquiry. This study examined Representing Actions/Events/States, a critical stylistic tool, in Adeyemi's *Nigeria of My Dream*, a widely read text grounded in discourses of national transformation. Drawing on Lesley Jeffries's Critical Stylistics and Halliday's transitivity model from Systemic Functional Grammar, the study investigated the ideological stance embedded in the author's choice of lexical verbs in relation to Nigeria's challenges and prospects for transformation. Using a descriptive qualitative research design and criterion-based purposive sampling, sixteen excerpts were drawn across the book's six chapters. The findings revealed four major transitivity process types. Material Action Processes, involving Actor and Goal, appeared in intentional (MAI), supervision (MAS) and event (MAE) subtypes. Verbalisation Processes, involving Sayer, Verbiage and Target, represent linguistic action. Mental Cognition Processes, involving Senser and Phenomenon, occurred as cognition (MC), reaction (MR) and perception (MP) subtypes. Relational Processes, expressing static relationships between Carrier and Attribute, appeared as intensive (RI), possessive (RP), and circumstantial (RC) subtypes. These processes construct Nigeria as a site of purposeful action, critical reflection and transformative possibility. The study demonstrated that Adeyemi's verb choices are not ideologically neutral; they strategically situate leaders, citizens and the nation as actors in a moral economy of change, assigning responsibility, fostering aspiration, and emphasising the urgency of collective action. The study adds to scholarship on the stylistics of socio-religious motivational discourse in Nigeria, offering insight into how linguistic choices shape national imagination and civic responsibility.

Keywords: Representing actions/events/states, motivational discourse, ideology, Pastor Sam Adeyemi, *Nigeria of My Dream*.

Introduction

Some Nigerian church leaders have shown the trend of using spiritual texts extensively to convey ideas and concepts with secular impressions. This ranges from political commentaries, socio-economic appraisals to education and human rights activism. In line with Burgess (2020), Pentecostalism, which has emerged as the prevailing paradigm of Christianity, is projecting the growing emphasis of the church and pastors on playing a prominent role in society to tackle social, moral, political and economic issues in the modern society that impact the immediate community of believers and then the general public. As observed by Ibrahim (2009), this is not limited to Christianity, as the terrain of Islamic religion leaders also lean towards influencing political identification and rhetoric. Adegoju and Adetunji (2019) corroborated this perspective by claiming

that the church in Nigeria has been involved in social and political activities through its leaders, including the pastor, in addressing issues such as economy, corruption, leadership, civic responsibility, inequality, etc. This puts them in the position of leadership not only in their spiritual roles in the communities but also in socio-political engagements.

Motivational teachings serve as an imperative medium through which religious leaders navigate this socio-religious boundary. Through the mixture of spiritual resources and persuasive use of language, Pentecostal church leaders generate writings capable of influencing the socio-political leanings of their adherents. Writing is a very valid means through which the human mind can be affected, especially with the use of language in a persuasive manner to canvass people towards goal-oriented actions (Bezbaruah, 2025). This makes the intervention of clerics like Pastor Sam Adeyemi, leveraging on their exalted position in the society as ‘reverends’, through the writing of motivational books apposite in changing the thought patterns of an average Nigerian, enabling them to dream of a better self and a better Nigeria, and imbibing in them a can-do-spirit which will inspire them towards liberation, to the end that national transformation becomes birthed.

The discourse of national transformation is a unique genre in which spiritual authority, civic rhetoric and motivational appeal converge in the writings of Pentecostal pastor-authors in Nigeria (Ottuh & Ayetin, 2015; Esu & Agwayo, 2025). The language used in such texts is ideologically laden. The writers use a careful selection of words, images and grammar to set up visions of the nation which contain ideological investments and which invite readers to certain interpretive and moral stances. The grammatical structure of such a text, in particular the patterning of the world into actions, events and states with the help of the lexical verbs, is at the heart of any description of the ideological work of the text.

In this discourse, Pastor Sam Adeyemi’s *Nigeria of My Dream* (NMD) occupies a distinctive position. The book is a motivational text that uses the tools of spiritual authority to call citizens to change the national consciousness. NMD is a long-term rhetorical effort for national transformation based on values of visionary thinking, cultural revolution, and civic responsibility. The book highlights the many possibilities that accompany having a foresight and emphasises that the responsibility of changing Nigeria is in the hands of Nigerians. It is the lexical verb choices that create its linguistic essence. It is verbs that enact, describe, reflect, and relate, and it is the verb choices that are the focus of the present study.

Pastor Adeyemi is the Founder and Senior Pastor of Daystar Christian Centre, Lagos. On 18 November, 1995, he established Daystar Christian Centre and Success Power International. He is considered as one of the greatest motivational preacher-authors in Nigeria. New Man (2023) described him as a ‘Gospel preacher and motivational speaker’. He has authored several motivational publications such as NMD, which is the source of data for this study, and which has been widely read and commended for its practical advice ailing from spiritual insights. Okeke (2018) notes that Pastor Adeyemi’s preaching and writing have had a profound impact on the religious and social landscape of Nigeria, inspiring and motivating people to live more fulfilling and purposeful lives. This is done via his teachings and writings, significantly utilising insights from the sacred text of the Christians, the Holy Bible. Therefore, he serves as a testament to the influence of the sacred on the secular, as being promoted by Christian leaders in Nigeria.

One of the most ideologically charged grammatical resources a writer has at his disposal is verb choice, or as Halliday would have it, transitivity. The type of verbal process chosen influences the expectations of the participants as well as the distribution of responsibility, agency and causality within the clause (Simpson, 1993; Coffey, 2013). This insight is formalised in Lesley Jeffries' Critical Stylistics (CS) as the analytical tool of Representing Actions/Events/States, which is one of ten in the CS toolkit for revealing the ideological potential of everyday texts. As stated by Jeffries (2010), the tool of representing actions, events, and states is that a speaker or writer's selection of a lexical verb determines the presentation of reality from his or her perspective. As Jeffries (2010:37) explains, 'a situation can be presented as a doing (an action), a happening (an event), or a being (a state)', and each of these perspectives represents a different ideological perspective on the actors and circumstances involved. This tool is based on Halliday (2004) who theorises the clause as the main unit in which human experience is linguistically represented. Consequently, this study will be centred on the critical stylistic tool of Representing Actions/Events/States in Pastor Sam Adeyemi's NMD.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a growing body of scholarly research on the intersections of religion, language and national identity in Nigeria. Burgess (2013) looks at the civic aspects of Nigerian Pentecostalism, in which the role of the pastor becomes that of social activist and community builder. Gaiya (2015) reveals that Charismatic Pentecostal churches in Lagos are tend to be more actively involved in social and political issues. These sociological observations set the broader perspective within which pastor-authored motivational books such as NMD function.

From a linguistic perspective, scholarship has involved the spoken discourse of Nigerian pastors within various frameworks. Osasona (2017) uses Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) to analyse the role of Pastor Tunde Bakare's messages as tools of societal emancipation, focusing on the transitivity and modality aspects of the texts that are used to encode criticisms against economic mismanagement and leadership failures. Adegoju and Adetunji (2019) use Critical Stylistics to analyse Bakare's political messages, which they see as being conveyed in the process of naming and describing, enumeration, equating and contrasting, and representing time and space. Al-Shemmary (2020) uses the framework developed by Jeffries in analysing selected American sermons, which shows how the choices of transitivity are interwoven with the rhetorical and ideological strategies of the entire text. Robbin and Adelakun (2022) examine Bishop Oyedepo's sermons using the pragmatic act theory of Jacob Mey and discover a variety of acts that are meant to assure, inform and re-enlighten the listeners. Adetunji (2026) analyses the motivational rhetoric in Pastor Sam Adeyemi's *The Parable of Dollars* and shows how he employs Aristotle's three artistic proofs and stylistic tools to convey economic messages from the biblical reinterpretation.

Despite this scholarly attention to the relationship between religious rhetoric and socio-political discourse in Nigeria, the linguistic strategies that are used by Pentecostal leaders to deal with the issue of national identity and civic aspiration in print media have not been fully explored. First, most of the studies have concentrated on spoken discourse, sermons, political speeches and public addresses, and therefore, written motivational texts written by Nigerian pastors have not been given much linguistic attention. Secondly, the particular means of action, event and state representations have not been studied specifically and analysed in a particular way in the body of scholarship on Nigerian socio-religious discourse. This research study aims to bridge both these

gaps at once by focusing on transitivity processes in a written motivational text, thus showing how the choice of verbs is an ideological tool in the process of building up national transformation rhetoric. Exploring these options in NMD thus sheds light on the craft and the ideology of Adeyemi's transformative rhetoric.

Objectives of the Study

In line with this focus, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. identify the transitivity processes through which actions, events and states are presented in Pastor Sam Adeyemi's *Nigeria if My Dream*;
- ii. examine how the sub-types of these processes assign agency, responsibility and causality to leaders, institutions and citizens within the text;
- iii. interpret the ideological significance of these lexical verb choices in constructing the discourse of national transformation.

Literature Review

Transitivity has been a productive tool for investigating language, ideology, and action in texts, as exemplified by Halliday's (2019) classic study of William Golding's *The Inheritors*, which showed how the choice of verbs could imply a whole worldview and give the moral responsibility for an action to the reader in ideologically significant ways. Following Halliday's observations, Fowler *et al.* (1979) prioritised the concept of transitivity as the central one for critical linguistic analysis, stating that the process type, participant roles and grammatical voice are some of the most ideologically productive features of any text.

van Dijk (2001), Fairclough (1992) and Wodak (2002) have theorised the link between grammatical choices and power within the critical discourse analysis (CDA) tradition, showing how the transitivity structures in texts reflect social relations, limit agency, and normalise ideology. The work of Coffey (2013) is important because it connects Halliday's ideational metafunction with the project of ideological analysis and demonstrates how the selection of process type, participant naming and circumstantial elements combine to create ideological depictions of social reality. Furthermore, Simpson (1993) shows that transitivity is not a neutral grammatical category, but rather a 'grammar of experience' which reflects and reproduces the speaker/writer's perception of the world.

In the specific context of Nigerian religious and motivational discourse, Osasona (2017) is one of the very few scholars to have used a transitivity-informed analysis. The study, using Halliday's SFG, shows how the transitivity choices of Pastor Bakare present a critical view of the socio-political failures in Nigeria, thereby implicating the roles of key socio-political actors (government, citizens, religious leaders) in the socio-political roles they are assigned. In this critical stylistic analysis of Bakare's political teachings, Adegoju and Adetunji (2019) show that the tool for representing actions, events, and states is not only used but also works in concert with other tools to create a coherent ideological frame for their data. In their analysis of Bishop Oyedepo's keynote address, Kamalu and Tamunobelema (2015) reveal how the rhetorical process choices are used to create authority, to engage the audience, and to further the speaker's rhetorical goals. According to Adetunji (2026), Pastor Adeyemi in *The Parable of Dollars* recommended planning, passion, positive thinking, savings and investment, and giving back, while corrupt

leaders are condemned. This was accomplished through the use of metaphors, antithesis, repetition, parallelism, imagery and metonymy with the use of Aristotle's three artistic proofs to persuade.

Theoretical Framework

The analytical approach for this study is anchored on the theoretical insight of Lesley Jeffries CS supplemented by Halliday's SFG. These are discussed in turns below.

Critical Stylistics and the tool of Representing Actions/Events/States

CS, as presented by Lesley Jeffries, is an integrative approach to the analysis of the ideological meaning in texts. It combines the concerns of CDA, which focuses on the interrelationship between language, power, and ideology, with the analytical precision of stylistics that focuses on the micro-level linguistic choices that contribute to the construction of meaning in a text (Adegoju & Adetunji, 2019; Adegoju & Famakinwa, 2018). The strengths of the three traditions are combined in CS, as Alaghbary (2013) shows, which is located at the intersection of critical linguistics, functional linguistics, and CDA. Jeffries's (2010) model provides a set of 10 analytical tools that can uncover the worldview that is being shaped by texts.

Being the second tool in Jeffries' (2010) toolkit, Representing Actions/Events/States is concerned with the ideologically loaded choice of lexical verbs. A speaker/writer's use of verb forms reflects their experiences of situations. It can be expressed as an action (foregrounding agent, intention), as an event (downplaying agency), or as a state (arresting the dynamic quality of processes into static configurations), each of which has different ideological implications. Jeffries (2010) expands on this and explains that transitivity relates to the relationship between verbs and their subject and object, and that the selection of the main verb can impact the nature of the process and the participants. Notably, the tool recognises that there is not a one-to-one relationship between form and function in language; the same syntactic configuration can support multiple ideological readings.

Jeffries identifies four main categories of transitivity relevant to Critical Stylistics, which are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Jeffries' Transitivity Model (Representing Actions/Events/States)

Main Category	Participants	Sub-categories	Sample Verbs
Material Action Processes	Actor Goal	Intention (MAI)	<i>tempered, expressed, taught, encouraged</i>
		Supervention (MAS)	<i>delivered, forget</i>
		Event (MAE)	<i>used (inanimate actor)</i>
Verbalisation Processes	Sayer Verbiage Target	—	<i>Said</i>
Mental Cognition Processes	Sensor Phenomenon	Cognition (MC)	<i>thinks, think, realised</i>
		Reaction (MR)	<i>Like</i>
		Perception (MP)	<i>hear, see</i>
Relational Processes	Carrier Attribute	Intensive (RI)	<i>is, are (copula)</i>
		Possessive (RP)	<i>have, has</i>
		Circumstantial (RC)	<i>is (locative/circumstantial)</i>

Note. Adapted from Jeffries (2010)

Material Action Processes are physical or concrete actions, where the participants are referred to as Actor and Goal. They are further distinguished from Material Action Intention (MAI), in which the action is deliberate and under the Actor's control, to Material Action Supervention (MAS), in which the action results in something that the Actor did not intend and to Material Action Event (MAE), in which an inanimate participant is in the Actor position, thereby reducing the human element. Verbalisation Processes (VP) are linguistic actions in which a Sayer, Verbiage and Target are involved. Mental Cognition Processes are internal phenomena experienced by a conscious Sensor, the complementary Phenomenon, and subcategories are Mental Cognition (MC), Mental Reaction (MR), and Mental Perception (MP). Relational Processes, lastly, are static relations between Carriers and Attributes, instantiated as Intensive (RI), Possessive (RP), and Circumstantial (RC) relations.

Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and Transitivity

Jeffries's discussion of transitivity is based on the theoretical framework of Halliday's SFG. The language in SFG has three metafunctions simultaneously: the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual. The transitivity system, which expresses the constellations of processes, participants and circumstances (Halliday, 2004; Coffey, 2013) in which the speaker/writer represents the world, is used to realise the ideational metafunction, in particular its experiential strand. Transitivity is essential to any study of the ideological representation of reality in texts, according to Simpson (1993), because it is a way in which a speaker perceives and expresses the world he or she experiences.

Halliday (2004) mentions six types of processes: Material (physical or concrete actions and events), Mental (sensing, feeling, thinking), Relational (being and having), Verbal (saying), Behavioural (physiological and psychological behaviour), and Existential (existence and occurrence). Jeffries's (2010) model combines Material and Verbal processes into separate but analogous categories, whereas the handling of the Material category is the one that differs mainly from Halliday's. Both frameworks are used to represent the same subject-verb-object relational structure, so they are combined in the present analysis, with Jeffries's category system being the main organising taxonomy and Halliday's providing additional theoretical support.

Methodology

This study is based on data obtained from Pastor Sam Adeyemi's NMD, a motivational book of 105 pages, which consists of an introductory chapter and five main chapters. The book was chosen because it is one of the longest and most circulated written motivational discourses of a Nigerian Pentecostal pastor on the issue of national transformation. The study is a descriptive qualitative research design, as Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended that a qualitative research design is appropriate to study the linguistic and rhetorical phenomena.

The excerpts were selected using criterion-based purposive sampling (Paltridge & Starfield, 2019), where excerpts were chosen because they were directly relevant to the tool of representing actions, events and states. In this study, sixteen excerpts are analysed, which have been taken from various chapters of the book. These excerpts were found by systematically reading the whole text, focusing on lexical choices of verbs and their position within the clauses. It is based on Jeffries' CS as an overall framework and Halliday's transitivity model supplementarily for the different types of processes identified. The analysis follows Fairclough's (2003) analytical dimensions, which consist of a description of formal features and an interpretation of ideological meanings.

Analysis

In this section, the different lexical verb processes within the critical stylistic tool of Representing actions/events/states are applied to the analysis of excerpts from Pastor Sam Adeyemi's NMD.

Material Action Processes

The most widely used transitivity category in NMD is Material Action Processes. They include all the physical, material and meaningful operations that constitute the discourse of national transformation in the book. In this category, there are three subtypes: Material Action Intention (MAI), Material Action Supervention (MAS), and Material Action Event (MAE).

Material Action Intentional (MAI): Purposeful Agency and the Ethics of Transformation

Material Action Intentional (MAI) processes represent the intentional and goal-directed actions. In NMD, MAI verbs are used strategically: they give purposeful agency to specific actors, creating a moral landscape in which intentional action towards national transformation is made possible and required. The following excerpts illustrate this.

Excerpt 1

Bishop David Oyedepo tempered my zeal to 'change' Nigeria with knowledge several times, especially seven years ago when I expressed my plans to launch a campaign for national transformation immediately. He encouraged me to teach the

insights I was getting to our congregation before I would take them to the nation. I took his advice and taught on service for one straight year. (9)

The series of MAI verbs ‘tempered’, ‘expressed’, ‘encouraged’, ‘took’, and ‘taught’ work together to tell of the intentional mentorship and deliberate preparation that led to Adeyemi's campaign for national transformation. Each verb describes a purposeful action and characterises it by a named Actor: Bishop David Oyedepo is the Actor of ‘tempered’, ‘encouraged’, while Pastor Adeyemi is the Actor of ‘expressed’, ‘took’, and ‘taught’. The attribution of intentional agency is an ideologically important one. It constructs the writer's voice as one that is disciplined, patient, and purposefully learned, rather than impulsive and enthusiastic; that is, it is a voice of responsible authority that further establishes the author's ethos and renders his motivational project as purposeful and well-founded. The Goal-directedness of each action is confirmed by the grammatical Objects ‘my zeal’, ‘my plans’, ‘me’, ‘his advice’, and ‘on service’ which all emphasise the goal of each action, further reinforcing the sense of each action being calculated and purposeful.

Excerpt 2

From now, whenever anyone disrupts order or jumps a queue, the rest of us should protest. Some of us should jump out of our cars to stop the person who is driving on the wrong lane. And when someone stands to correct what is wrong, others should join in to support what is right. (62)

The MAI verbs in this excerpt: ‘disrupts’, ‘jumps’, ‘protests’, ‘stops’, ‘stands’, ‘corrects’, ‘joins’, ‘supports’, create civic action as an ongoing purposeful action. Adeyemi identifies certain behaviours (queue-jumping, driving in the wrong lane) as acts of deliberate disorder and then calls for intentional civic responses through MAI processes. The two pairs of verbs ‘correct’ and ‘support’ are positioned against ‘wrong’ and ‘right’ to establish a moral economy of purposeful action, in which citizens are not passive spectators but responsible agents. The shift in the negative examples from third-person actors (‘anyone’, ‘the person who is driving’) to first-person collective actors (‘we’, ‘us’, ‘others’) in the prescriptive responses suggests a collective civic identity, bound together by deliberate commitment to social order.

Material Action Supervention (MAS): Unpredictability and the Case for Systemic Transformation

Material Action Supervention (MAS) processes are those that occur unintentionally or outside the Actor's control, events that happen beyond the Actor's conscious will. According to Jeffries (2010:42), MAS encodes actions in which ‘the outcome is not controlled by the actor’, and frequently emphasises the contingency or unpredictability of events. The rhetorically specific role of MAS in Adeyemi's text is to make undesirable realities seem to be the result of systemic inadequacy, not individual negligence, and thereby make the case for structural transformation.

Excerpt 3

I remember another story that touched many people several years ago. A woman delivered a set of sextuplets. When she realized that she was pregnant, she visited a clinic. The clinic was not well equipped. (42)

The MAS verb ‘delivered’ in the context of bearing sextuplets is for an event that is beyond the woman's intention and control. The birth of a child is a natural event and the birth of six children is a rare event of biological supervention. Adeyemi narrates this extraordinary event as a case in point to highlight the systemic failures, such as lack of an adequately equipped clinic, an inadequate supply of incubators, and fuel shortages, that turn this blessing into a crisis. The MAS process then situates the developmental shortfalls in Nigeria as structural problems that are far beyond the capacity of normal human experiences to handle, and end up with catastrophic results.

Excerpt 4

There are too many parties and occasions that require we spend money that could have otherwise been invested. There are too many 'aso okes' (local textiles) to buy. Some people still owe on the last four sets they sewed for one party or the other but that does not stop them from collecting another one on credit. We forget that the borrower is subject to the lender. (51)

The MAS verb ‘forget’ is used here to represent a non-intentional but significant mental lapse, the forgetting of a basic economic principle. Adeyemi's approach to financial improvidence as a social forgetting and not a deliberate recklessness helps to cushion the moral condemnation and at the same time brings to the fore the demand for cultural reorientation. The MAS framing also implies that the issue is not wickedness, but a lack of the appropriate mindset, so the prescription for a new mindset is even more pressing and possible. This is an ideological shift, one that attributes a cultural deficiency to a mistake, and one that can be rectified with enlightenment, that is at the heart of the motivational project of the book.

Material Action Event (MAE): Inanimate Actors and the Weight of Systemic Failure

Material Action Event (MAE) processes are identified by the presence of an inanimate Actor, a situation in which ‘human actor is either missing or played down’ (Jeffries, 2010:41). When the process of assigning action to non-human entities, MAE processes emphasise the systemic, structural, or institutional forces that cause events to happen, and thus shift moral responsibility from persons to systems. Adeyemi uses this transitivity to blame the failure of the Nigerian state.

Excerpt 5

The hospital used the doctor's car to convey the babies to the nearest public hospital which was better equipped. Unfortunately, they had only one incubator and it was occupied. They were advised to take the babies to another public hospital, but there was not enough fuel in the car as there was scarcity of petrol in the country. (44)

The clause ‘The hospital used the doctor's car’ has the verb ‘used’ which is followed by the subject ‘the hospital’ which is not a person but an institution. This is an example of MAE: the hospital, an inanimate institutional object, does something (transports patients in private vehicles) which should be done by the proper medical infrastructure. Adeyemi makes the hospital the actor of this action, thus revealing the absurdity of institutional inadequacy without naming and blaming any individual. The MAE framing therefore serves two ideological purposes: it exposes the systemic failure of the Nigerian healthcare infrastructure and it shifts the reader's focus of indignation to the system and not to any individual in it. This is in line with the motivational rhetor's requirement to indict without alienating, to criticise the structure while calling its human constituents to change.

Verbalisation Processes: Language as the Instrument of Transformation

VP are processes where language itself is used as an action, in situations where a human Sayer produces Verbiage aimed at a Target or implied audience. Jeffries (2010) points out that VP processes 'involve a Sayer, Verbiage, and ... a Target'. In NMD, VP is used to establish the writer's persuasive credibility in the authority of historical, biblical and civic voices that are familiar to the audience, to enhance the transformative vision.

Excerpt 6

This book is a proposal. It is an encouragement for us to develop a new concept that will define Nigeria and at the same time predict its future. Eleanor Roosevelt said "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." (7)

The VP verb 'said' is used to introduce a quotation from the famous Eleanor Roosevelt. Pastor Adeyemi has opted to quote this, to present it as a speech act by a named Sayer, not to paraphrase the idea, so that it becomes an utterance rather than a tentative opinion. The Sayer (Roosevelt), the Verbiage ('The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams'), and the implicit Target (the Nigerian reader) form a triangular persuasive arrangement that sustains an international voice in support of the pastor's vision for the home. The VP process therefore has an intertextual function, establishing the ideological rhetoric of national transformation of Adeyemi in the world of visionary thinking.

Mental Cognition Processes: Thinking, Feeling, and Perceiving the New Nigeria

Mental Cognition Processes are the internal aspects of human experiences: thinking, feeling, and perceiving. Jeffries suggests three subtypes: MC which encodes thought and realisation; MR which encodes emotional response or attitude; MP which encodes sensory or perceptual awareness. These three sub-types are interdependent in Adeyemi's text, as they build a cognitive and affective structure for national transformation, and place the reader's inner life as the first field of engagement for change.

Excerpt 7

"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." (22)

Excerpt 8

I think government is missing fantastic opportunities to make money. We should make money from people who break our laws. (63)

Excerpt 9

When she realized that she was pregnant, she visited a clinic. The clinic was not well equipped. (42)

In the following extracts the MC verbs 'thinks', 'think', and 'realized' serve different but related ideological roles. The biblical proverb in Excerpt 7 makes thinking the determinant of personal identity and destiny: 'as a man thinks ..., so is he'. Thus, thinking is the process that determines the construction of the self and, by extension, the construction of the nation. In this instance, Adeyemi uses the MC verb to assert the primacy of thought over circumstance, and to convey the ideology that change in Nigeria must start in the mind. In Excerpt 8, 'think' starts the Pastor's personal reflection on economic opportunities available to government, which is not just an

opinion, but a way of engaged civic thinking. The MC verb in this instance gives analytical authority to Adeyemi's point of view. The moment of cognitive awakening that initiates action is captured in Excerpt 9: 'realized' (when someone becomes aware of pregnancy, the next step is to go to a clinic). The order of realisation and action in the story is used to show the ideological stance of the MC, which is that awareness is the necessary prerequisite for purposeful action.

Excerpt 10

We like material things but if we do not expand our mental capabilities, we may not be able to produce material wealth. (71)

Excerpt 11

When I hear the names of cities like New York, New Orleans, New Jersey and the like, I get the impression that they evolved from their old states. Likewise, we shall have New Lagos, New Gombe, New Warri and so on. (99)

In Excerpt 10, the MR verb 'like' represents a collective affective orientation (societal preference for material possessions) that Adeyemi challenges as being inadequate without a commitment to mental expansion. The naming of this mental reaction makes visible an emotional tendency that plays an implicit role in the culture, and puts it under analysis and correction. So, the MR process makes the reader's own emotional life a space for self-examination and transformation. The MP verb 'hear' in Excerpt 11 represents a sensory experience that activates conceptual reasoning. The naming of American cities not only triggers their sound but elicits a cognitive-visionary leap to the reimagining of Nigerian cities. The MP process here serves as a bridge to the gap between sensory input and transformative vision. It illustrates how perception itself can become the raw material of national transformation.

Relational Processes: Mapping the Attributes of the Present and the Envisioned Nigeria

Relational Processes are the static aspect of Adeyemi's transitivity repertoire, which connects Carriers to Attributes by states of being, having, or circumstantial positioning. According to Jeffries, there are three subtypes: RI which uses a copula verb to connect a subject to a complement; RP which encodes ownership or inclusion; and RC which locates events or states in a particular spatial or conditional context. In NMD, these relational processes are used to describe the attributes, conditions and moral properties of the nation and its citizens.

Excerpt 12

There are businesses like hotels and restaurants in our country that have been around for many years and have thrived. The people who own these businesses make money but do not reinvest in their businesses. They spend all the money. Then, after sometime they are shocked that customers no longer patronize their businesses. (64)

Excerpt 13

Treat yourself with dignity, make your environment beautiful. We must remember that cleanliness is next to godliness. (65)

The use of the copula verb 'are' in the RI clause of Excerpt 12, 'There are businesses ... that have been in existence for many years and have prospered' gives a foundation of economic capability by presupposing the existence and success of some Nigerian businesses. This baseline is then broken by the narrative of mismanagement, that is failure to reinvest, in subsequent MAI verbs. The RI structure thus rhetorically sets up the credibility of the next criticism, which is a claim that recognises the capacity that already exists before it names the behaviours that are undermining it. The RI clause 'cleanliness is next to godliness' functions differently in Excerpt 13. By making a physical state (cleanliness) to be equal to a moral and spiritual state (godliness), the copula is transforming an apparently trivial behaviour norm into a spiritual obligation. This aligns with Adeyemi's overall approach of blending civic values with spiritual consciousness to strengthen their impact.

Excerpt 14

God saw the potential for light when the earth was chaotic, in darkness and water covered the entire land surface. He saw mountains, hills and valleys; He saw trees, flowers and fruits. In fact, God saw the whole of nature as we have it now. (18)

The possessive RP verb 'have' in 'as we have it now' makes the collective human claim of the natural world as it was divinely envisioned. In a RP process, Adeyemi connects the current human experience of nature to the original act of creation by God, which means that he is introducing an ideology of inherited potential: the world, and therefore Nigeria, has the resources to transform itself. The RP clause is therefore a theological and motivational warrant for the belief that the development of Nigeria is not an act of creation ex nihilo, but a realisation of existing potential.

Excerpt 15

The difference is simply in the value for excellence. Your house should not be the one looking dirty on the street. (65)

Excerpt 16

The beauty of our future is in our dreams. Our future is in our picture. (20)

In such RC clauses, the verb 'is' is not only used to connect subject and complement but also to place the subject in a particular conditional and/or locative space. In Excerpt 15, 'The difference is simply in the value for excellence', RC encodes excellence as the circumstantial condition that determines competitive outcomes in business and in personal life. The adverb simply has an important ideological role: it sets aside complexity and reduces the difference in success to a single, easy-to-access value, making the prescription for transformation seem simple and attainable. In Excerpt 16, 'The beauty of our future is in our dreams' and 'Our future is in our picture' use RC processes to locate the future in the interior space of imagination and vision. The pastor creates a circumstantial connection between the current imaginative acts and the future national realities, and thus inserts the ideology that the nation's future is not imposed upon it by outside powers, but is the product of collective internal visualisation. Among the most persuasive uses of Relational Process in the text is to bestow the act of dreaming with the status of a nation-building practice.

Discussion

The analysis shows that the transitivity selections in NMD are a coherent ideological programme geared towards the discourse of national transformation by Pastor Sam Adeyemi. The predominant material actions are ideologically significant as being MAI processes. Adeyemi sees civic change as a practice that is willed and disciplined, and available to every player, within a matrix of intentional and purposeful actions, teaching, advising, launching campaigns, adopting strategies. This is similar to Ibrahim's (2009) observation that the vocabularies of intentional action are used in the construction of a motivational discourse that calls audiences to action for civic and political purposes. In NMD the MAI verbs create a rhetoric of agency which calls the reader to be an active participant in the theatre of national transformation instead of a mere spectator.

MAS processes can be used strategically for a complementary motivational purpose. Adeyemi's motivational effect of realism is achieved when he recognises that supervention, life beyond the individual's intention, enriches his transformational argument. The sextuplet narrative and the cultural forgetting of the borrower-lender relationship are not arguments against the intentional agency but arguments to the contrary, they are arguments for the complexity of the Nigerian context in which intentional agency must operate. This is a rather high-level motivational strategy that shows the text's understanding that credible transformation discourse has to deal with the recalcitrant nature of social facts.

The Mental Cognition Processes, especially the MC sub-type, are ideologically basic. The frequent and strategic use of cognitive verbs in the book demonstrates the linguistic enactment of the process of national transformation that starts in the mind. As Adeyemi clearly demonstrates in the biblical admonition that as a man thinks in his heart, so he becomes, the transitivity of thought is the transitivity of being. This is what makes the mental processes in NMD not just descriptive, but prescriptive, showing the reader how to be mentally disposed to the text.

Relational Processes, especially the RI and RC sub-types, play important functions in positioning Nigeria's current conditions and the envisaged future in stable equivalences and contextually framed settings. The copular verb 'is' is ideologically productive in this text because it makes the relations it encodes into the natural and inevitable: cleanliness is godliness; the future is in the dream; excellence is the circumstance of difference. These RI and RC constructions present ideological propositions in grammatical form as factual statements, which is the mechanism by which ideology becomes common sense (Fairclough, 1992; Jeffries, 2014).

The findings build on previous works like Adegoju & Adetunji (2019) and Adetunji (2026) who have noted that religious elites use resources like critical stylistic tools and rhetorical properties to articulate issues of national governance in linguistically particular ways. The present study confirms this in the context of a published motivational text, showing that the transitivity strategies used in print discourse are at least as ideologically productive as those used in spoken rhetoric.

Conclusion

The critical stylistic tool of Representing actions/events/states has been explored in this study, and it is seen that the selection of lexical verbs in NMD is ideological. Four main types of processes were identified: Material Action Processes (MAI, MAS, MAE), Verbalisation Processes, Mental Cognition Processes (MC, MR, MP) and Relational Processes (RI, RP, RC), each of which serve

different but complementary ideological roles in the development of the discourse of national transformation.

In MAI processes, agency is given to key actors with a clear purpose and objective, which reflects the ideology that Nigeria's transformation is one of collective will. MAS processes view systemic failures as unexpected events that require structural, not individual, remediation. In the context of MAE processes, institutional entities are considered as Actors, and the failures of systems and structures are condemned but not the moral responsibility of any single person. The rhetorical vision is grounded in the authority of known voices through the processes of verbalisation, which adds to the credibility of the discourse. Mental Cognition processes create the interior life (thinking, feeling, perceiving) which is the first place where transformative possibility can take place, the ideology that national change starts in the individual mind. Relational processes are the current state of Nigeria and its people in terms of attributes, possessions, and circumstances, setting the ground floor for critique and the moral framework for the envisioned transformation.

These choices of transitivity are a coherent grammatical ideology that builds a world where purposeful agents can and must act, in which systemic failures are diagnosable and correctable, and in which individual Nigerians' interior dispositions are the final determinants of national destiny. In sum, the study highlights the analytical potential of Critical Stylistics as an approach to the investigation of socio-religious motivational discourse and the cleverness of Pastor Adeyemi's linguistic choices in his ideology. This analysis could be fruitfully expanded to other motivational texts written by Nigerian pastors, where comparisons could be made and the different ideological frameworks which are encoded in the transitivity patterns could be assessed. The findings also complement the existing literature on the relationship between language, religion and national identity in Nigeria and provide fruitful lines for comparative stylistic studies of motivational speech within the context of African Pentecostalism.

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