

A Critical Discursive Reading of Satirical Construction of Hunger and Hardship in the lyrics of Eedris Abdulkareem's 'Tell Your Papa'

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Abstract

This study undertakes a discursive reading of satirical construction in the lyrics of Eedris Abdulkareem's song *Tell your Papa*. The examination of how hunger, hardship, mass poverty and misery are interrogated in the song is crucial for the representation of socio-economic realities in the country and the people's perception of the country's political leadership. The data analysis is anchored on Theo van Leeuwen's (2008) network of social actors' representation because of its critical discourse tools and theoretical further insights are drawn from Halliday's (1994) transitivity systems. The findings reveal five discursive constructions: call to action and for justice, reverberation of hardship, ubiquity of hunger and anger, monstrosity of insecurity and exaltation of perversion realized through strategies such as: patronage, dichotomization, imputation, accentuation, call-out, estimation, delineation and victimization. The constructions are undergirded by discursive tools that include role allocation, nominalization and differentiation to achieve different representations in the song. The study concludes that the satirical construction in the song is a clarion call on the present administration to evolve economic policies that are people centred in order to ameliorate the acute poverty in the nation.

Key words: Tell your papa, discursive reading, satirical construction, hunger and hardship, Eedris Abdulkareem

1. Introduction

Hunger is a physiological and psychological condition that is occasioned by the deprivation of good nutrition. It occurs when the individual is not voluntary fasting or dieting but lacks adequate food to meet energy needs and this inevitably results in chronic diseases, reduced performance and sometimes anger towards people. Fasano (2025) remarked; 'hunger comes across as a product of redundant neuroendocrine circuitries responsible for maintaining metabolic balance.' Statistics from World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nation's food assistance arm, indicates that there are over 343 million citizens of the world confronted with acute level of food insecurity in 74 countries around the globe, including Nigeria. The multidimensional poverty index (MPI) 2025 report of National Bureau of Statistics confirmed that millions of Nigerians are living below the poverty line. In the World Bank's April 2025 Poverty and Equity Brief for Nigeria, it was disclosed that the poverty rate among Nigerians has reached an alarming 75.5 per cent particularly among the rural dwellers. This report is frightening because Nigeria is one of the largest economies in Africa with a wealth of human and natural resources. It is therefore an economic paradox that Nigeria which is believed to be the home of richest people in Africa struggles with mass poverty and misery. Hunger is visible in many homes in Nigeria today and it is inextricably tied to hardship; in fact, hunger is a

byproduct of hardship which is a state of economic downturn experienced by an individual or a people. From the foregoing, hunger as a scourge is a discourse issue which deserves critical analysis in order to de-problematize it. Misturelli and Heffernan (2008) observed that regardless of how poverty is framed, its subjection to diachronic dissection over time has demonstrated the need to de-problematize the scourge.

It is worthy of mention that the federal government of Nigeria has risen to the challenge of tackling poverty by evolving economic policies that are people centred and through multi-faceted initiatives such as: youth empowerment (N-Power, skills training), scholarship awards and education loans, agricultural support and crucial economic reforms including the establishment of a federal ministry that oversees poverty alleviation christened the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction. Unfortunately, government's effort is a drop in the ocean because it has not successfully decimated hunger and lifted millions of Nigerians from the poverty bracket. In the present democratic dispensation headed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, some economic reforms were implemented such as: removal of fuel subsidy, unification of multiple windows at foreign exchange market, increase in electricity tariff and recently, the new tax reform. The implementation of these economic policies engendered inflation of food prices, transport fares and high cost of living in the country which exacerbated the hardship of Nigerians. This situation gave birth to the popular slogan: '*Ebi n pa wa*' (We are hungry). As a corollary, Eedris Abdulkareem, a Nigerian musician and social commentator, produced the song: *Tell your Papa* to capture the economic downturn that ensued and state the fact that there is a huge disconnect between the political leaders and the masses. In the Nigerian music industry, the singer is popular and noted for protest songs having released the album: *Nigeria Jaga Jaga* in 2004 to lampoon President Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian government but the song was banned on radio airplay by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) that same year. This latest release entertains a number of constructions that are worthy of discourse exploration in linguistic study.

Songs are important discourse constructions that project the ideological dispositions of their composers which may or may not be objective. Subjecting discursive construction of songs to examination can reveal the structure and representations inherent in them. This study provides a discursive reading of satirical construction in Eedris Abdulkareem's lyric '*Tell your Papa*' in order to examine how hunger, hardship, mass poverty and misery are interrogated in the song. This is crucial for the representation of socio-economic realities in the country and the people's perception of political leaders. The research relies on theoretical insights from Van Leeuwen's (2008) network of social actors' representation because of its relevance to studies in critical discourse analysis. Additional insights are derived from Halliday's (1994) transitivity systems.

2. Literature Review

Several studies have been carried out by scholars on bad governance and unpopular socio-economic policies of government such as: fuel subsidy removal (Olosu, 2024; Igwebuikwe, Abioye and Chimuanya, 2017; Chiluwa, 2015; Akinwotu; 2014), appropriate pricing of petroleum products (Salami & Ayoola 2010), the quest for fair play in Niger Delta discourse (Ayoola, 2008), police brutality and bad governance (Osisanwo and Oji, 2025; Aboh, 2024;

Egbe, 2022) and secessionist discourse engendered by maladministration (Osisanwo and Akano, 2023; Iyoha & Alugbin, 2023). The inadequacies of governance have been subject of critical evaluation and captured in scholarship while some have been challenged through songs, skits, cartoons and protest literature.

Evaluating the boundary of music as a social construct in Nigeria today is an arduous task because the musical industry is inundated with different genres. Protest music against bad governance and all forms of malfeasance in government is now universally endorsed while political actors appropriate the utilitarian value in music on campaign trails to market their ideologies (Ademilokun, 2013) and assault the integrity of their opponents (Osisanwo 2021). There are other musical merchants who sing to rebuke what they consider as the irresponsibility of the political class. This latter group utilizes music not just for entertainment but to critique the government and keep them on their toes in order to achieve impactful leadership in the polity. Ademilokun (2013: p.265) succinctly stated: "music is never innocent as it helps its performer to either communicate some information or to assuage the feeling of the performer". Music is indeed inherently political (Clough, 2021) and Akintayo, (2007: p.1) noted that music has a powerful psychological influence and it has been used and continues to be used in the manipulation of people's minds.

Prominent among the revolutionary artistes that have contributed to Nigerian social engineering discourse through their music was Fela Anikulapo Kuti. His works have ideological underpinning (Tella, 2024; Ajayi, 2017) in addition to their stylistic and contextual base (Ugwu and Chikwendu, 2024; Bamigboye, 2018). Fela's music manifested as, and is still, the voice of the oppressed and downtrodden. His songs were rendered in Nigerian Pidgin English which cuts across linguistic boundaries in Nigeria and this afforded him mass audience impact particularly with the downtrodden. One of the contemporary anti-establishment crooners in Nigeria whose lyricism appears to be the loudest is Eedris Abdulkareem. His release of *Jaga Jaga* in critical evaluation of President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration in 2004 sets him aside as a social crusader. The criticism of President Bola Tinubu's administration in his recent song, *Tell your Papa*, is a review of the untold hardship unleashed upon the people by government and discontent pervasive in the country. As it was with *Jaga Jaga*, so it is with *Tell your Papa*; the song has equally been banned. This study is thus out to investigate the satirical constructions in *Tell your Papa*, using the lens of critical discourse analysis.

Dissent music has always been part of our cultural experience and the recognition of the need to respond to unpopular governments or their policies defines the importance of this genre of music. From its contribution to social activism (Ewala, 2015; Kazachok, 2023) and to its growth as an element of youth subculture (Lyon, 2020), dissent music has always received substantial attention in scholarship. A study by Way (2016) investigated the impact of protest music videos posted on the internet on populism. Way deployed social semiotics to examine how impactful protest music has been to subversive politics in Turkey. The study concluded by acknowledging the contribution of dissent music to social integration. Further engagement of dissent music discourse by Sadler (2022) explored how the discourse is conducted on online platforms, using the social media App, TikTok, as the case study to entertain social and ideological functions in the engineering of social change movement in the American society

beyond the identifiable thematic preoccupations accrued to the song dissected. Sadler averred that the use of hashtags to punctuate the song has the potential to decontextualize dissent music. It concluded that such potential can be inimical to the goal of dissent music.

Within the Nigerian context, practitioners in music industry have also been quite vociferous in their resistance to what can be considered as embers of maladministration as found in numerous studies in the country. One of such studies by Ewata (2015) examined the sequencing of turns in Fela Anikulapo's *The Best of No Nations*. Relying on discourse analysis, Ewata examined the extent to which discourse markers (that define the sequencing of turns in the song) and elements of pidgin are deployed in the music to satirise the betrayal of the ordinary citizens by government institutions, including the United Nations. Another investigation of dissent music by Titus (2017) revealed the concretization of musical space at Gani Fawehimi Park in Ojota, Lagos from the digital space in protest against fuel subsidy removal by the President Goodluck Jonathan administration. Titus submitted that the Ojota space is an avenue to ventilate dissent songs and showcase performances of musicians. In another study, Oseni and Ishola (2024) investigated the ideological base in dissent songs by Folarin Falana also known as Falz. The research relied on insights from critical discourse analysis to dissect the linguistic features in the songs to expose the ideologies therein in relation to leadership problems in Nigeria. The study revealed how the linguistic features ascribable to the songs express the dubious patriotism of the leaders to the project called Nigeria.

The present study provides the discursive constructions in Eedris Abdulkareem's *Tell your Papa*, a song produced to satirise the perceived malfeasance associated with the present administration of President Bola Tinubu. The study aims to provide answers to the following questions: what are the discursive constructions inherent in the song? How are these constructions communicated? What are the discursive strategies attainable from these constructions? Finally, how do these constructions represent social actors and actions?

3. Theoretical Orientation

The study is anchored on theoretical insights from Critical Discourse Analysis as presented by Van Leeuwen's (2008) inventory of social actors, complemented by Halliday's transitivity system. Van Leeuwen's model holds that social realities and actors that enliven them can enjoy descriptions according to the roles assignable to them, which could be in reality or in the texts they are represented. Of the numerous categories and subcategories of the discourse elements describable in these representations as identified by Van Leeuwen (2008), relevant aspects in the delineation to the current study are highlighted hereunder.

One major category in the theory is role allocation where social actors or actions are represented according to the roles or tasks they perform. The roles that social actors engage in can be presented through grammatical activation or passivation. In their activated or passivized form, a social actor or action can be represented as actor, senser, sayor or behavior. This is the aspect of the inventory that aligns with Hallidayan transitivity system. Exclusion is another category in the inventory which downplays a social actor in a text. This is realised through two means – backgrounding and suppression. While backgrounding comes across in form of non-finite clauses and “paratactic clauses” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.30), suppression is from nominalisation, beneficiary deletion, process nouns or adjectives or agent deletion.

Genericisation and specification are yet another category which represents social actors in relation to the class they belong to or particular individuals that can be singled out for identification respectively. Social actors can also function in a group and represented as such; this is what Van Leeuwen (2008, p.32) calls assimilation. Assimilation subdivides into aggregation and collectivization. While the former represents social actors in terms of the statistics of participants involved in a social action; the latter dwells on generalised opinions to represent social actors. Furthermore, association and dissociation represent social actors basically as groups. Whereas association has to do with how different groups unite in pursuance of a collective goal; dissociation represents social actors whose initial union has collapsed. Determination and indetermination are also representation of social actors or actions in the framework. In determination, the identity of the social actors represented is disclosed while the identity is anonymous in indetermination. There is also differentiation as a category which distinguishes between “us” and “them” in representation of social actors. Functionalisation, another category, represents social actors based on their “occupation and role” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.42) or the activity in which they are engaged. Nominalisation arises from “the unique identity” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.52) ascribable to an individual or a social actor. Other discursive tools include identification and categorisation. While identification represents a social actor according to what they are permanently, categorisation does so in terms of the identity or function they share with others.

The transitivity system explains the behaviour of language in terms of participants and their roles in a discourse encounter. As a framework found within the Systemic Functional Grammar, the transitivity system accounts for the distinctive linguistic features observable in the discourse objective to which language is assigned. Being a discourse practice, the transitivity system is process-driven. The framework is concerned with the choices available in the realisation of this objective on the one hand and the networking pattern of the process that defines this objective on the other (Halliday, 1985). Relying on one of the Halliday’s (1985) meaning potentials, the transitivity system is located within the ideational metafunction. What language aims to represent and denote at any point in time is what is called the ideational metafunction. Halliday is of the opinion that three major processes (material, mental and relational) and three minor ones (verbal, existential and behavioural), though the minor ones which are subsumed in the major processes, are retrievable in discourse events. The material process is an action-packed clause. The ‘actor’ in the material process is evident but the ‘goal’ of the process receives less attention. The actor and the goal are the participants. The mental process describes the state of mind of the participants, including their sensing. The process portrays a psychological circumstance where the participants are the senser and the phenomenon. The relational process identifies with the attributes of the participants. The clause in this process is realised with the use of verb ‘be’ or copula such as ‘appear, become or seem’. The participants here are the carrier of the attribute and the attribute itself. The verbal process is summarised as the action of saying something while the behavioural process is used to express physiological acts. The existential process indicates the state of being of an object. The integration of Halliday’s transitivity system with the role allocation process in Van Leeuwen’s inventory of social actors is a salient application for the analysis of the various discursive constructions in the data.

4. Methodology

The data for the study is Eedris Abdulkareem's song, *Tell your Papa*. The transcript of the controversial song was retrieved from Boom play Application and filed. Since the song itself has failed governmental censorship, it is only made available unofficially on the internet from where it was downloaded, listened to and compared with the transcript. This afforded minor corrections on the transcript. Relevant aspects of the song that are fundamental to the satirical constructions analysed in the study are subjected to descriptive examination; applying tools from theoretical insight of Van Leeuwen's (2008) inventory of social actors in Critical Discourse Analysis.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

In this section, the analysis of the dissent song, *Tell your Papa*, by Eedris Abdulkareem is provided. It is a satirical review of the two-year old administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the lyric is written in Nigerian Pidgin English while the translation is provided in Standard English. However, no translation is provided where the message of the lyric is intelligible. It is presented in numbered excerpts and each excerpt arranged in clauses. The discursive constructions and strategies inherent in them are also provided.

a) Call to action and for justice

One recurring discursive construction in the song is the persistent call on Seyi Tinubu, the son of Mr. President, to the predicaments Nigerians have experienced under the administration of his father. This is tied to the subtle call on the judiciary to dispense justice without fear or favour. For illustration, here are excerpts from the song.

Excerpt 1

Tell your papa

*Seyi, tell your papa country hard
country*

Tell your papa

Seyi, tell your papa people dey die

Translation

Tell your father

Seyi, tell your father there is hardship in the

Tell your father

Seyi, tell your father people are dying

Excerpt 2

On behalf of Nigerians

Take our message to him

Excerpt 3

Judiciary is compromised

These three excerpts discursively construct the subtle call on the government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to action and for justice in the face of the hardship confronting the country. While the construction in Excerpts 1 and 2 are communicated through "Seyi", to his father, the head of government, Excerpt 3 is targeted at the judicial arm of government. In Excerpt 1, the

song pointedly *nominalises* “Seyi” as the conveyor of the call. This is discursively strategic considering the closeness of Seyi to his father and his perceived utilitarian significance in the government particularly occupying the unofficial position of the ‘First Son’. Calling out “Seyi” to take up the task of revealing the sorry state of the country to his father is *patronage*. “Seyi” is also *allocated* the role of the *sayer* of the verbal process “tell” with the *verbiage* “*your papa country hard.*” This construction is thus deployed to bring the plight of Nigerians to the President who is probably disconnected from the people.

The construction goes on in Excerpt 2 to *allocate* another *role* to Seyi by asking him to serve as the *senser* of the mental verb “Take” which selects a *phenomenon* in “*our message to him*” all in the bid to call Seyi to action and concretise the *patronising* overtures targeted at him. The last Excerpt in this construction implicitly calls on the “Judiciary” to execute its task of dispensing justice, having been portrayed as being “*compromised*”. To maximise this construction, the song *assigns* the “Judiciary” the role of the *carrier* of the *relational process* “*is*” and “*compromised*” as the *attribute* to engender *imputation* as a discursive strategy and represent the temple of justice in the country as blemished.

b) Reverberation of hardship

Hardship is another discursive construction in the song and it is the consequence of poverty. With the spike in prices of goods and services after the removal of fuel subsidy on the first day of the administration of President Tinubu, the outcry of the masses about hardship engineered by this spike is stridently constructed in the song, as evident in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 4

*People dey jump inside lagoon
Because of economic hardship
Very wicked policy
Anti-people’s policy*

Translation

People are jumping into lagoon

Excerpt 5

*Electricity na luxury
Your papa don increase tariff
Even the light, we no see
To on AC, na luxury
Heat wan kill us for the country
To buy data na luxury
Three hours e don finish*

*Electricity is luxury
Your father has increased tariff
Even though, we have no power supply
To switch on Air Conditioner is luxury
Heat wants to decimate us in the country
To buy internet data is luxury
In three hours, it gets exhausted*

Excerpt 6

*Your papa no be the best president
To buy cloth wear na luxury
One jeans 40k
Tshirt 25k*

*Your father is not the best president
To clothe oneself is luxury
One jeans costs 40 thousand naira
A t-shirt costs 25 thousand naira*

Excerpt 7

*Parents work everyday
Dem still no fit pay school fees*

*Inflation for the nation
Nigerians no fit function*

*Parents who work everyday
They are still unable to pay their children's school fees*

*Inflation in the nation
Nigerians cannot meet their obligations*

Each of the Excerpts 4, 5, 6 and 7 in the foregoing discursively constructs hardship as widespread among Nigerians in the present administration. In Excerpt 4, the song unveils how Nigerians whom it *collectivises* as “*people*” jump “*into lagoon*” on suicide mission as a consequence of economic hardship instantiated by what the song calls “*very wicked*” and “*anti-people's policy*” of government. This policy is a reference to the removal of fuel subsidy and the unprecedented hardship that accompanies it is responsible for the commission of suicide by the “*people*”. The word “*people*” here is utilised to measure the intensity of hardship they face, and thus realise *estimation* as a discursive strategy. To further concretise this construction, “*people*” as the actor in the Excerpt is assigned a role with the *material process* “*are jumping*” to vividly render their suicide encounter. This engenders *delineation* as a discursive strategy and presents the “*people*” as disconsolate.

In Excerpt 5, the construction deploys a more robust *delineation* of the hardship faced by Nigerians combined with *accentuation* to enhance the discursiveness in the song. It begins by asserting that “*electricity*”, to which it *allocates* some *role* in the construction, is beyond the reach of ordinary Nigerians. Being the *carrier* of the *process* verb “*is*”, “*electricity*” attracts an *attribute* in “*luxury*” that distances it from the poor in the country. It blames the President whom it *nominalises* as “*your father*” for this hardship having taken up the role of an *actor* of the *material process* “*has increased*” to inflict the *goal* “*tariff*” on Nigerians. In spite of the hike in “*tariff*”, the construction further claims that there has not been any significant improvement in “*power supply*”. This presents Nigerians, whom the song identifies as “*we*”, as victims of power failure to discursively entertain *victimization*. In furtherance of this *victimhood*, the construction laments the inaccessibility of Nigerians to facilities that could guarantee comfortable living such as “*AC*” (air conditioner) and “*data*” for surfing the internet. These are *allocated* the *role* of the *carrier* of the *relative process* “*is*” which also attracts the *attribute*, “*luxury*”. The circumstance of the *mental process* “*has finished*” emphasizes the speed with which data is exhausted “*in three hours*”.

The construction continues in Excerpts 6 and 7 to discursively maximize *imputation* and *victimhood*. The emphasis on the prices of “*One jeans*” and “*T-shirt*” at forty thousand naira (“*40k*”) and twenty-five thousand naira (“*25k*”) respectively is to show how devalued the naira has become and how the economy has reduced the quality of lives of the people. The attention is shifted to another social group categorised as “*parents*” in Excerpt 7 and *allotted* the *role* of the *actor* to “*work*” in *circumstance* (“*everyday*”) that shows that they are not lazy, yet they are incapable of paying their children’s “*school fees*” or meeting “*their obligations*” owing to the skyrocketing “*inflation*” being experienced by “*the nation*” after the removal of fuel subsidy. The discursiveness in the construction of reverberation of hardship in the song thus represents Nigerians as afflicted and President Bola Tinubu as their afflicter.

c) Ubiquity of hunger and anger

One discursive construction that reverberates across the song is the pervasiveness of hunger and anger in the country since the inception of the present administration. This is illustrated in Excerpts 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Excerpt 8

Seyi, ebi pa mekunu
Tinubu, ebi pa mekunu

Translation

Seyi, the poor are hungry
Tinubu, the poor are hungry

Excerpt 9

Tell me wetin your papa don do?
Hunger wan kill us
To buy food na luxury

Tell me what your father has done?
Hunger wants to decimate us
To buy food is luxury

Excerpt 10

Hunger dey, your papa no try

There is hunger, your father has not performed satisfactorily

Excerpt 11

Seyi, how far?
I swear your papa no try

I swear your father has not performed satisfactorily

Excerpt 12

Hunger dey, anger dey
You still wan make dem cooperate?

There is hunger, there is anger
You still want them to cooperate?

The construction of hunger in the song begins discursively with patronage in Excerpt 8 by *nominalising* “*Seyi*” and “*Tinubu*” as recipients. It laments the situation of Nigerians, categorised as “*the poor*”, and *allocates a role* to them by making them the *carrier* of the *relational process* “*are*” which commands a sorry *attribute* in “*hungry*”. By singling out “*Seyi*” and “*Tinubu*”, the construction *differentiates* them from the hungry poor, justifying their occupancy of a position that can be *patronised*, and thus *dichotomising* them from the poor. In Excerpt 9, the construction *accentuates* the pervasiveness and intensity of hunger in the land. It discursively strategically initiates this with *imputation* by demanding from “*Seyi*” what the President, identified as “*your father*”, “*has done*”. Portrayed as a social actor, “*hunger*” is *identified and assigned a role* of the *actor* to the *material process* “*wants to ravage*” with a goal in “*us*” and this includes the singer among Nigerians being *victimised* by starvation. The *imputation* ends with the lamentation about the low purchasing power of Nigerians to access food (*to buy food*) which is made to serve as the *carrier* of the *relational process* “*is*” with an *attribute* in “*luxury*”. The hunger construction is extended in Excerpt 10 with the *imputation* that acknowledges the social reality of starvation by *assigning role* to it through the *existential process* in “*There is ...*” and *identifying* the President (“*your father*”) as the *actor* of the *material process* “*has not performed*” in a *circumstance* (“*satisfactorily*”) that brews failure. In Excerpt 12, the social reality of “*hunger*” and “*anger*” *allocated role* through the *existential*

process in “There is ...” is discursively *accentuated*. The construction however wonders why the President and his son, simply identified as “you”, should “*expect*” that these hungry and angry people, also *identified* as “them”, would “*cooperate*” with them. In the end, the discursive construction of pervasive hunger and anger in the song represents the President as incompetent and indifferent to the people’s plight.

d) Monstrosity of insecurity

The manifestation of insecurity as a monstrous challenge in present administration occupies some form of discursive construction in the song, as demonstrated in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 13

Kidnappers dey kill Nigerians

Seyi, try travel by road without your security

Make you feel the pains of fellow Nigerians

You dey fly private jet

Insecurity no be your problem

Nigerians wey dey travel by road

Some of them dey face death sentence

Eni ori yo, o dile

Shagamu, Ore, Benin experience

Translation

Kidnappers are killing Nigerians

Seyi, try and travel by road without your security

So you can feel the pains of fellow Nigerians

You are flying on private jet

Insecurity is not your problem

Nigerians who are travelling by road

Some of them are facing death sentence

Whoever escapes bids the journey farewell

Excerpt 13 discursively *delineates* the construction of insecurity in Nigeria. It begins by *identifying* some of the culprits of this monstrosity, “Kidnappers”, and *allocates role* to them as the *actor* of the *material process*, “are killing” the people it *collectivises* as “Nigerians”, the *goal* of the process. The construction then progresses to *nominalise* and *call out* “Seyi” to attempt a tentative *role* as the *actor* of the *material process* “travel” in an unusual *circumstance*, “by road without your security” in order to act as the *senser* (“you”) of the *mental process* “can feel” with a *phenomenon* in “the pains” of people *collectivised* as “fellow Nigerians”. The construction further calls Seyi simply *identified* as “you” by *allocating* another *role* to him as the *actor* of the *material process* “are flying” in a safe *circumstance* “on private jet” unlike the common “Nigerians”, who have to occupy the same transporting *role*, but in an insecure *circumstance*, “by road”. The song poignantly characterises (*identifies*) the action that brings about this latter *circumstance*, a social action, as “death sentence”. To exemplify the claim in the construction, the song lists out roads considered as dens of kidnappers in the country; “Shagamu, Ore, Benin experience”.

e) Exaltation of perversion

One more discursive construction that radiates the song is the glorification of perverse conduct in President Tnubu’s administration. Some of the officials of the administration are believed to

be using the machinery of the government to oppress Nigerians. The following excerpts appositely capture this construction.

Excerpt 14

Telecommunication companies connive with the government
Banking industry connive with the government
To frustrate Nigerians
Dis na total wickedness

Translation

This is total wickedness

Excerpt 15

If people dey protest, you use soldiers oppress them

*If people protest, you use
soldiers to oppress them*

Excerpt 16

Lagos-Calabar coastal road
Four point nine billion per kilometer
Seven hundred kilometers run into multiple trillions
When normal road inside town no get any attention

Even Dave Umahi don do us mago-mago

*When inner city road does not get
attention*
Even Dave Umahi has deceived us

Excerpt 17

State of Emergency inside River State
Gbaju e, grab am
Definition of this government
Akpabio, Natasha, I go soon shoot una movie

State of Emergency in River State
Scam them, grab it

*Akpabio, Natasha, I will soon
shoot a movie on you*

In Excerpt 14, the exaltation of perversion is satirically explored as a discursive construction beginning with how “telecommunication companies” and “banking industry” *associate* (“*connive*”) to “frustrate” Nigerians. That the government seemingly approves of this association reeks of some perversion. This sanction, identified as “*this*”, is *allocated* a role of the carrier of the relational process “*is*” with an attribute in “total wickedness”. In Excerpt 15, the trajectory of this perversion is extended through the *delineation* of how the government cracks down on Nigerians who are *collectivised* as “*people*” for carrying out a legitimate role as the actor of the material process in “*protest*”, by responding through the exploitation of double material processes in “*use*” and “*oppress*” as the actor (“*you*”) to attract goals in “*soldiers*” and “*them*” respectively. The exaltation of perverse conduct is equally expressed in the song through the perceived corruption hemmed around the construction of “*seven hundred kilometer*” coastal road by the government, a social action *nominalised* in Excerpt 16 as “*Lagos-Calabar coastal road*” and *aggregated* to have cost “*four point nine billion*” naira “*per kilometer*” at the expense of other roads which the song simply identifies as “*inner-city roads*”. The humongous amount that will be required to complete the road further *aggregated* as “*multiple trillion*” is discursively constructed to *accentuate* the exaltation of perversion in the

song. The excerpt ends with a discursive strategy that *calls* out the Minister of Works *nominalised* as “Dave Umahi” and *specified* for superintending over this project through a *role allocation* that sees him as the *senser* of a *mental process* in “has deceived” with a *phenomenon* in “us” which *assimilates* the singer among Nigerians targeted by this deception.

Moreover, the declaration of “*State of Emergency in River State*”, another social action of the present government *identified* in the song further *delineates* the exaltation of perversion in Excerpt 17, considering the fact that the sustenance of the emergency rule which demolishes legislative and executive structures to install a sole administration is an aberration to democracy. The sense in the *role allocation* in the *material verbs* “scam” and “grab” with “them” and “it” as their *goals* respectively *accentuates* perversion, even when their *actor* which is a vague reference to the government is *excluded* through *agent deletion*. The construction ends with a promise enwrapped in *self-role allocation* captured in the *material process* “will soon shoot”, with “I” (the singer) and “a movie” as *actor* and *goal* respectively. The *circumstance* of the allocation, “on you”, is a reference to “Akpabio, Natasha”, *specified* characters who are supposedly distinguished Senators of the Federal Republic but enmeshed in a burning issue of social misconduct at the highest legislative chamber in the country. In the end, the construction of exaltation of perversion in the song represents telecommunication companies and banking industry as vicious; the people as afflicted; and the government as vicious and unscrupulous.

6. Conclusion

The study provided the discursive constructions in Eedris Abdulkareem’s song, *Tell your Papa*. The findings indicated that five satirical constructions were found in the data: call to action and for justice, reverberation of hardship, ubiquity of hunger and anger, monstrosity of insecurity and exaltation of perversion. All of them, except the first, portray the administration of President Bola Tinubu negatively. The only seeming positive construction in the song is call to action and for justice. This utilizes functionalisation, determination, differentiation and genericisation; reverberation of hardship foregrounds functionalisation, exclusion and categorisation; ubiquity of hunger and anger draws on differentiation, categorisation and assimilation; monstrosity of insecurity entertains differentiation; and exaltation of perversion deploys exclusion, association and specification. The constructions rely on these tools to engender eight discursive strategies: patronage, dichotomisation, imputation, accentuation, call-out, estimation, delineation and victimisation. The constructions manifest as a call on the administration of President Tinubu to demonstrate greater responsibility and prioritise lifting millions of Nigerians out of poverty. The study thus establishes that discursive constructions are resourceful to the representations and understanding of diverse social realities in Nigeria.

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