

The Ideology of Post-truth in Nigerian Cities: A Discourse Historical Analysis

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Abstract

This paper examines how post-truth ideologies are communicated in Nigerian cities. In Nigeria, with the city of Aba (in Abia State) as a reference point, there appears to be instances of post-truth discourses. This paper seeks to discover the specific contents/topics of post-truth discourses in Aba, their discursive strategies, and the agents of post-truth dissemination in Aba. The paper adopts content analysis as the research design and the discourse historical analysis of Reisigl and Wodak (2009) as its theoretical framework. Data used for analysis are obtained through participant observation and secondary sources. By juxtaposing specific contents/topics and their reactions in the 20th and 21st centuries respectively, the paper finds out that the specific contents/topics of post-truth ideologies include: exam malpractice, pregnancy out of wedlock, fraud/duping, indecent dressing, non-participant in immoral activities, and greeting/respect. More so, based on argumentation and perspectivisation, the paper discovers that the arguments for post-truth are fallacious and that the perspectivisation is individualistic, instead of communal. Post-truth ideologies, as discovered, are introduced with discourses like: “It depends on how you see it,” “This is 21st century,” and “Who does it help?” In addition, the research discovers that culture borrowing borne out of interpersonal communication, social media as well as movies and music are the agents of post-truth dissemination. The paper concludes that post-truth ideologies are communicated in Aba with confidence through assertive statements and support individualism over communalism, which is contrast to the Igbo ideology of *Ọha niile nwe nwa* “A child belongs to everybody.” The paper recommends that post-truth ideologies should not be embraced in Nigerian cities because they do not conform to African culture in general.

Keywords: *Post-truth, ideology, Nigerian cities, Aba, discourse historical analysis, discourse, 21st century.*

Introduction

Many people use language for different purposes. Language has been described as a two-edged sword, which can be employed for achieving positive or negative ends. In essence, individuals use language to make utterances that abide by Gricean maxim of quality (which states that interlocutors must say what is true)¹ or flout it. In 2016, Oxford Dictionaries regard

¹ The Gricean maxim is a set of principles for a cooperative communication enunciated by Grice (1975), which enables interlocutors to save face. The maxims are four: quality, quantity, manner, and relevance.

'post-truth' as its word of the year and defines it as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." The United States of America's 2016 election makes the term 'post-truth' to resurface in the world, which makes people to assert that the world is entering a post-truth era. 71% of Trump's utterances were false or mostly false as opposed to Clinton's 29% (Kollanyi, Howard and Woolley, 2016). Similarly, Univision News' Data Unit in Miami reports that, a week prior to the presidential election, for every lie told by the Democrat candidate, the Republican candidate told four (Zarzalejos, 2017).

Within the last two years, the concept of post-truth has attracted a lot of interests from researchers. Llorente (2017) opines that post-truth is a situation where objectivity and rationality are overshadowed by emotions, or willingness to uphold beliefs even though the facts show otherwise. He further avers that in post-truth, truth is relativised where individuals have their approach to truth. In this scenario, opinions are accorded more respect than facts to the extent that 'how' a story is told takes precedence over 'what' is told. In support of this, Zarzalejos (2017) remarks that post-truth consists in the relativisation of truth, in the objectivity of data becoming commonplace and in the supremacy of emotional speeches. He notes that post-truth houses fake news, hoaxes and alternative facts. In the opinion of Medeiros (2017), post-truth can be conceived as emotional appeals that activate personal beliefs that are more efficient at winning over opinion than objective facts.

On the other hand, Rosales (2017) purports that there is nothing like a half-truth; a truth is a truth and a lie is a lie. He notes further that to speak of "my truth" is an assault to reason. He observes that people are entitled to their opinion in some matters but when it comes to objective facts like the number of inhabitants in a city, public debt, or budget deficit, there is only one truth and opinions do not count.

Admittedly, post-truth can be seen and felt in virtually all the sectors of life like the media and economy but it is predominant in politics. For Roberts (2010), post-truth in politics have developed a culture in which (public opinion and media narratives) have become almost entirely disconnected from policy (the substance of legislation). This implies that most politicians and other actors in politics execute actions based on their personal feelings rather than what the constitution stipulates. This subjective action bastardises the democratic processes and results in national underdevelopment. Medeiros (2017) observes that the Great Britain's exit from European Union, Colombians voting 'no' to the referendum that can solve fifty years of conflict, and Trump's false utterances during US 2016 elections are instances of post-truth in action.

With the presence of the social media, post-truth and fake news can circulate the whole society in a twinkle of an eye. When people tend to see post-truth statements very often, they begin to conceive it as the real truth. This is in line with the Igbo proverb, *Ihe ojoo gbaa afo, o buru omenaala* (When bad things are done repeatedly, they become a tradition). According to Al-Rodhan (2017), the post-truth era is becoming unbearable as a result of different media outlets, which are capable of disseminating unverified information, which mislead the public. In support of this claim, Llorente (2017: 19) observes:

...new ways of relating to public opinion emerge and alternative media become established. Traditional journalism methods are losing ground with the emergence of new communication channels like personal blogs, YouTube, instant messaging channels such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook Chat, or social media networks like Snapchat or Twitter. A simple tweet can now mobilize the masses and bring about results which would have been inconceivable a few years ago.

Similarly, Gooch (2017) concurs that in the 21st century, access to informative content, as well as its immediacy and volume has no precedents, which has brought about a revolution in a way that people can produce information themselves. In essence, this problem can be traced to the fact that journalists failed to understand that they are the historians of the contemporary era and what they report are what the masses construe to be true (Orsi, 2017). The common practice among traditional (newspapers) media is that the owners of such news publishing firms do not publish news that degrade their political/social background or affiliation. However, aside social media, which Llorente (2017) points out above, it appears that post-truth ideologies can as well be communicated and disseminated through music and videos.

The Pew Research Center (PRC) (2017) in their research on the future of information online aim at ascertaining if the future of information online will improve or will not improve as regards the publishing of fake news. From the information elicited from respondents, the research reviews that 64% of adults believe fake news stories cause a great deal of confusion and 23% said they had shared fabricated political stories themselves – sometimes by mistake and sometimes intentionally. In addition, the paper reveals that 51% of the respondents chose the option that the information environment will not improve because technology is developed by humans to actualise their personal goals and that unscrupulous participants with evil intentions will frustrate the best efforts of technology innovators to alleviate today's problems.

On the other hand, 49% of the respondents believe that the information environment will improve owing to the opinion that the rising speed, range and efficiencies of the internet, apps and platforms can be harnessed to restraint fake news and misinformation campaigns. Some predicted better methods will arise to create and promote trusted, fact-based news sources.² It is worthy of mention here that post-truth is conceived in the mind and it has a way of changing the ideologies of those who embrace it, that is, they will not be able to differentiate what is true and false. This poses a problem in our society because societal standards are destroyed and personal opinions triumph over facts. Religion, which aids in maintaining societal norms and moral behaviour has been politicised. People are willing to bury the truth because of fear or the financial benefits promised for lying. All these have made people to lose trust for one another. Individuals embrace immorality over morality.

² In September 2018, Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed urged the Nigerian Media to desist from fake news because it is a potent weapon for unintended calamities.

On the other hand, post-truth has attracted the interest of scholars in the fields of psychology (Glăveanu, 2017), politics; Monod, 2017), and law (Strong, 2017). It has not received proper attention in linguistics. The specific contents and discursive strategies of post-truth discourses have not been attempted especially from the discourse historical approach. This could stem from the fact that post-truth was just popularised after US presidential elections. This ‘linguistic neglect’ and the problems post-truth bring in the society form the problems of this study.

The researcher’s idea of post-truth is not just fake news as published in the social media or in online newspapers, post-truth is conceived in this paper as those culturally and religiously established norms or traditions, which are seriously considered as abominations in the olden days but are now taken lightly in the present generation. In the light of this, the general objective of this study is to study ideologies of post-truth in Nigerian cities in general and Aba in particular. In specifics, the objectives of the study are to:

- i. identify the specific contents or topics of post-truth discourses;
- ii. analyse the discursive strategies of post-truth discourse interlocutors in Aba; and
- iii. highlight the agents of post-truth dissemination in Aba.

This research paper will add to scholarship because of its novelty in looking at post-truth from the linguistic perspective. It will be beneficial to scholars and researchers alike who are interested in pragmatics and discourse studies. It will enlighten the masses on the dangers inherent in post-truth ideologies and discourses and the problems they pose to the society.

Discourse Historical Analysis

Discourse Historical Analysis (henceforth DHA)³ is an offshoot of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which focuses on how power is reproduced in the society. Its data for analysis can be elicited through observation, audio-visual recording, interview, and research in archives. In CDA, three concepts are paramount: critique, power and ideology. Being an extension of CDA, Reisigl and Wodak (2009) contend that DHA is incomplete without incorporating critique, power, and ideology in its framework. The term ‘critique’ can be viewed from different perspective or orientation but Reisigl and Wodak (2009) adopt the socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory. In this, they aver that there are three related approaches: text or discourse immanent critique, socio-diagnostic critique, and the future-related prospective critique. The text or discourse immanent critique looks at text to discern its linguistic features or discourse structures like paradoxes, dilemmas, and self-contradictions. On the other hand, socio-diagnostic critique concerns itself with the way discourses are used to manipulate participants of a discourse by drawing inferences from social theories. Lastly, the future-related prospective critique examines how discourses can be used to improve communication. Therefore, “DHA should make the object under investigation and the analyst’s own position transparent and justify theoretically why certain

³ The initial thought on DHA was enunciated by Wodak (1996) in her *Orders of discourse*.

interpretations and readings of discursive events seem more valid than others” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 88).

On the aspect of ideology in DHA, Reisigl and Wodak (2009: 88) purport that it is seen as “one-sided perspective or world view composed of related mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes and evaluations, which is [sic] shared by members of a specific social group.” In essence, it can be deduced that ideology is the sum total of one’s philosophy and perceptions of the world, which he communicates, most often, through language. As such, the level at which one’s ideology is being upheld by people over others hinges on the appropriate use of the powers of a language. In this case, power relations are borne out of ideologies, which are reproduced or reenacted through language whether written or spoken. In addition, Reisigl and Wodak (2009) aver that texts are often sites of social struggle in that they manifest traces of differing ideological fights for dominance and hegemony.

Furthermore, another component of Reisigl and Wodak’s DHA is the relationship that exists among discourse, text, and context. They opine that a discourse is an open unit, which has a dynamic semiotic entity that is open to reinterpretation and continuation. This implies that discourse has no static interpretation; it can be analysed from different perspectives. It can be likened to the story of six blind men who gave a different account of an elephant based on the part of the body they touched. Discourses come in form of text and/or talk. The difference between text and talk is that text makes a discourse long-lasting and provides an opportunity for someone who was not present during the time of actual speech production to be in the know of what transpired through reading the text.

Context is of utmost importance to DH analysts. Interpreting discourses outside their contexts results in loss of meaning and misinterpretation. In as much as context is advocated, DH analysts also recommend analysing “*intertextual* and *interdiscursive* relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses, as well as extra-linguistic social/sociological variables, the history of an organization or institution, and situational frames” (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 90).

Intertextuality involves the act of linking present texts to other texts, which are obtainable both in the present and the past. This enables the analyst to determine what has changed through history. This aspect is apt in the present study because the themes or discourse schemas in the 21st century will be compared with the discourses of the 20th century. This position supports the claim of Wodak and Ludwig (1999: 12) which holds, “[D]iscourse is always historical, that is, it is connected synchronically and diachronically with other communicative events, which are happening at the same time or which have happened before.” Texts can also be removed from a context and placed into another context; a process Reisigl and Wodak (2009: 90) referred to as *recontextualization*. They remark that if an element is taken out of a specific context, we observe the process of de-contextualization; if the respective element is then inserted into a new context, we witness the process of *recontextualization*. An instance can be cited of a scenario where a statement or quote in another text or activity is employed in a new text either for emphasis or to support one’s

claim. The end product of this process is that the text gains new meaning in its new environment.

The above process indicates that discourses are interrelated. Discourses on health can be used in discourses on sports. Also, discourses on language can as well be used in the society against the background that language and society are related. As it concerns context, Reisigl and Wodak (2009:93) adopt a triangular approach which has four levels:

- (1) The immediate, language or text-internal co-text and co-discourse;
- (2) the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses;
- (3) the extralinguistic social variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation;' and
- (4) the broader sociopolitical and historical context, which discursive practices are embedded in and related to.

From these levels, it is evident that not only does a DH analyst focus on the intrinsic contents of text or discourse he is analysing, attention must be paid to other social variables, which might be class, gender, race, sex, age etc. as well as the historical background of the discourse. These aid the analysts to arrive at a reliable result.

In DHA, three steps or procedures are taken into consideration: identifying the specific contents or topics of a specific discourse; investigating discursive strategies; and examining the linguistic means (as types) and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realizations (as tokens) (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 93). After the first step, discursive strategies are developed which are captured in the five questions below:

- (1) How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?
 - (2) What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?
 - (3) What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?
 - (4) From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?
 - (5) Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated?
- Reisigl and Wodak (2009: 95) identify five discursive strategies, their objectives the devices used in achieving the set objectives. The first is nomination, which discovers the discursive qualification of social actors, objects, phenomena, events/processes and actions employ the use of deictics, anthroponyms, metaphors, metonymies, synecdoches, verbs and nouns used to denote process and actions. The second strategy - predication has the same objective as nomination but its devices include simile, metaphors, phrases and collocations. Argumentation, which is the third strategy, aims at justifying or questioning claims of truth and uses topoi and fallacies as its devices. On the other hand, perspectivisation or discourse representation looks out for the stance of the speaker through deictics, quotation marks, metaphors, animating prosody, etc. The last strategy, intensification, modifies the illocutionary force through diminutives, tag questions, hyperboles, indirect speech acts, etc. Out of these strategies, our major focus will be on argumentation and perspectivisation, which tend to question truths or facts as could be seen in post-truth ideology or era.

From the foregoing, Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) method of analysing discourses takes on the historical perspective, which holds that understanding the history behind every text or discourse aids in a better understanding of such text. It also allows for *intertextual* and *interdiscursive* analysis. Thus, it is interdisciplinary in nature. On this premise, the theory becomes apt in analysing post-truth discourses in the city of Aba, Nigeria, by going through the history line to compare discourses with the same specific contents/topics in the twentieth century and those of the twenty-first century.

In applying DHA for data analysis, the three-dimensional processes of DHA will be adopted in this study. In the first process, the specific contents and topics of post-truth discourses will be identified. In the second process, the discursive strategies that will be concentrated in this work are argumentation and perspectivisation. Argumentation in DHA is considered as being either reasonable or fallacious. Fallacies occur when these are not abided by: clarity of expression, correct interpretation, logical validity, the respect of the shared starting points, the use of plausible arguments and schemes of argumentation, the obligation to give reasons, the freedom of arguing. Sometimes in argumentation, interlocutors use *topoi*. *Topoi* are not always expressed explicitly but by conditional or causal paraphrases. DHA also describes contradictory positions and their persuasive character on the basis of principles of rational argumentation and with regard to underlying manipulative strategies (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). This, then implies that interlocutors have manipulative intents when involved in argumentation. On the other hand, perspectivisation captures the speaker's point of view and his/her ideological perspectives. Thirdly, the data will be analysed based on context.

The *recontextualization* principle of DHA will be employed in the analysis. This is pertinent so as to ascertain the elements of post-truth embedded in the data to be analysed. The choice of this theory over other competing theories as discussed in (2.2) is because this particular theory is historical, a feature which is lacking in other reviewed theory. As a comparative study of what was obtainable in the 20th century and the present century, the theory of DHA becomes appropriate for analysing the data used in this work.

Methods

This research work adopts content analysis as the research design. Content analysis is used to investigate patterns of discourses systematically. It is apt for this research as it will be used to group post-truth ideologies into specific topics. The content area for this study is discourse analysis whereas the geographical area is the city of Aba. According to the census result conducted in 2006, Aba has a total population of 534, 265 persons. Aba is bounded by Port Harcourt, Owerri, Umuahia, Ikot Ekpene, and Ikot Abasi. Aba indigenes speak the Ngwa dialect of the Igbo language. As an economic city, many people from different parts of Igbo land and across Nigeria have settled in Aba. As such, the standard Igbo and Pidgin English have become the dominant languages for communication. A sample population of 100 persons is observed. The sample population comprises fifty males and fifty females. For each gender, youths (13-30 years) and adults (31-60) are observed. These 100 persons were randomly observed in market places, social functions like birthday celebrations and marriage ceremonies and casual discussions in restaurants and bars.

Through participant observation, fifteen (15) post-truth topics are gathered. An aggregate of the recurring statements for each topic was documented and used as the data for this research. Information from secondary sources like textbooks and journal articles, is a way of validating the data, especially the discourses of the 20th century on the specific contents or topics. The data obtained are analysed descriptively using the selected tenets of discourse historical analysis

Analysis and Discussion

Specific Contents/topics of Post-truth Discourse in Aba

In communicative events in Aba, there are salient specific contents/topics that surface. These specific contents are identified and the aggregate reaction of sample population in the 20th and 21st century is highlighted.

Specific contents of post-truth 20th century and 21st century discourses

S/N	Specific contents/topics	20th century discourses	21st century discourses (post-truth)
1.	Exam malpractice	Students should not indulge in it. It is bad for the educational sector.	It depends on how you see it. You need to look at it from the perspective that the student involving him/herself in exam malpractice might have failed the course/WASSCE ⁴ more than twice.
2.	Premarital sex	The best gift a woman can give her husband is her virginity.	One needs to marry someone that is experienced in bed.
3.	Pregnancy out of wedlock	What an abomination! Look at the stigma she has brought to her family.	She is not the first person and she will not be the last. Thank God she did not even abort it.
4.	Stealing	This is an unacceptable act. The culprits must be disgraced and punished.	I do not blame him totally. What if the thief has not eaten for days?
5.	Fraud/duping	What on earth will make someone to dupe his fellow human being? What people do not know is that what goes around comes around.	What do you want them to do? There is no job in this country.
6.	Reprimanding another person's child	A child does not belong to one person. You did well by cautioning the child.	Do not ever touch my child. Did I tell you that I am complaining of the child's attitude?
7.	Greeting/respect	You do not bring out your hand first to shake your elder or put your hands in your pocket when addressing your elder.	Who does greeting and respect help? Do you not know that we are in the 21 st century?
8.	Piercing of ear(s) by men	Wonders shall never end. What on earth will make a man to pierce his ear(s)?	<i>Oga</i> (Mr.), it is not your ear(s). It is his life. You cannot live it for him.

⁴ WASSCE is an acronym meaning West African Secondary School Certificate Examination. It is organised by West African Examination Council. It is an examination every student in high school must take in order to be qualified to seek admission in any tertiary institution in Nigeria.

9.	Speaking one's mother tongue	One's language is his/her identity. Lose it and lose your identity.	That one concerns you. Does speaking Igbo bring money?
10.	Advising/correcting someone	It is part of our responsibilities to admonish sinners.	This is the last time you will come here to advise me. It is none of your business. Remove the log of wood in your eyes first before coming to remove the tiny substance in mine.
11.	Standing for the truth	Anyone saying the truth is trustworthy. He/she has the fear of God in him/her.	Saying the truth is not the only thing that qualifies one to heaven.
12.	Non-participating in immoral behaviour	The beauty of a female is her character.	Who is this <i>Jew girl</i> ⁵ that does not know <i>what's up</i> ? She needs to join the moving train.
13.	Fidelity in marriage	Not being faithful to one's partner is flouting the commandment of God. When I married him/her, I gave my word that I will be faithful.	It is difficult to be having sex with one person throughout your life. Variety is the spice of life. After all, it is the wont of African men to have concubines.
14.	Giving alms/helping others	One's neighbour is the God he/she sees. Turning a blind eye to another person's needs is not in our culture.	I do not help people again before they will use my act of kindness and kill me.
15.	Indecent dressing	Our body is the temple of God. It must not be exposed unnecessarily.	It is my body. I wear whatever I feel comfortable in. If it is not good for you, you can go and hug transformer.

The above data capture the reactions of people to the specific contents/topic. The data presented under 20th century discourses gained prominence as well as those of the 21st century. The reactions of inhabitants of Aba to the specific contents in the 21st century suggest that there is shift from arguments based on fact to those based on opinion or personal feelings, which is a piece of evidence that the dawn of post-truth era has begun in Aba. The quality of these arguments and the ideologies conveyed are the concerns of the next section in this research work. It is worthy to note here that the researchers are not saying that there might not be elements of post-truth in the 20th century. The position of the researchers here is that post-truth has become prominent in the 21st century (especially during the time of this research) than in the 20th century.

Discursive Strategies of Post-truth Discourse Interlocutors in Aba

As has been stated in the theoretical framework, the discursive strategies that will be employed in this work are argumentation and perspectivisation. These discursive strategies will be handled simultaneously. In the first topic on exam malpractice, it is evident from the 21st century discourse that people who defend students that indulge in exam malpractice do not argue with logical reasoning but with opinionated feelings. Exam malpractice as an act, which has been religiously and morally declared vicious, it is supported on the grounds that the culprit is indulging in exam malpractice because he/she has failed many times and should

⁵ *Jew girl/guy* is a term given to any person that does not conform to the standard of an immoral sect.

be pardoned. The argument for exam malpractice holds no water and can be considered fallacious. The perspectivisation here is not based on fact but on feelings. Due to fear of failure, certificate consciousness, desire of parents to have their children in choice professions and university (Petters and Okon, 2013), the issue of examination malpractice is opinionated. This suggests that those who support exam malpractice are also participants in the vice. The implication of this to the educational sector in Nigeria is that hard work is relegated to the background.

Admittedly; religion, which is one of the propagators of right living, advises celibacy before marriage. In the 20th century; many at times, parents are humiliated if their in-laws discover the wife they married has been defiled (Nwala, 1985). Contrarily in the 21st century, most men do not even want to marry virgins because, according to them, they are “inexperienced in bed.” Some ladies on the other hand have vowed not to marry a virgin husband. In the present dispensation, in line with the *nomination strategies* of Reisigl and Wodak, virgins are no longer applauded but mocked. The perspective present here is individualistic. This alternative fact is gradually overshadowing the cultural values of Igbo people. Those who argue for premarital sex back up their claims with examples of newly wedded couples who decided to ‘preserve themselves’ until their wedding night only to discover that either the man is impotent or that the woman has fertility problems. This line of argument is used to manipulate people to buy the idea of the alternate truth being propagated. This argument lacks claims of truth and rightness, which makes it a post-truth discourse.

In addition, a young girl that gets pregnant out of wedlock was seriously derided and described as “the black sheep of her family.” It was considered an abominable act. This is the position of the society and religion on the matter. In post-truth era in Aba, this fact and stance has been restructured because of emotions. Instead of focusing on the negative aspect of getting pregnant out of wedlock, people turn it into a good thing by praising the young girl for not aborting the fetus. This redirection suggests that the present society has approved of pregnancy out of wedlock but frowns at abortion. This new way of reacting to pregnancy out of wedlock lacks logical validity and its propagators can be regarded as having argumentative skill deficiency syndrome. A survey conducted by Omogbolagum (2018) reveals that some ladies believe that getting pregnant out of wedlock is a sign to her husband-to-be family that she is fertile. Men posit that because of the nature of ladies in the world that they need to know that she is okay and that she still has a womb.

In the aspect of collecting what belongs to another, which could be in the form of stealing or duping; the language used in reacting to this phenomenon has changed overtime. Instead of declaring stealing and fraud as unacceptable acts, because of feelings and emotions, most people have created an alternate truth by supporting stealing and fraud. When people steal from the bank or collect ransom for the politicians they kidnapped, some people praise these acts by saying that the thieves or kidnappers are doing a nice job by collecting back the money that those politicians have embezzled. This alternative way of thinking is captured by an Igbo proverb, *E buru ozu onye ozo, o di ka e bu ukwu nku*. ‘If the corpse of another is being carried, it seems as if a bunch of firewood is being carried.’ The perspectivisation present here is that of personal vendetta, which negates the biblical injunction that “vengeance is for the Lord.”

In data (6) above, the Igbo precept that *Ọha niile nwe nwa* ‘The child belongs to everybody’ is flouted. One of the norms of Igbo people stipulates that everybody has a role to play in proper child upbringing. This is shown in the way people admonish a child even when the child is not theirs. This is rooted in African *Ubuntu* philosophy, which avers that a person is a person through other people. Igbo individualism is rooted in group solidarity where great emphasis is on communal co-operation and achievement, which must be traced to the formative influence of traditional social patterns. The idea of group co-operation is seen in all aspects of Igbo culture (Uchendu, 1965). In the 21st century, some parents are overprotective of their child(ren) to the extent that they dissuade people from reprimanding their child(ren). This act is hinged on the argument raised by these parents that they are capable of training their child(ren) alone. This argument is fallacious because it lacks clarity of expression. One thing that still remains a fact is that no man is an island; people need other people to improve. As a result of this, children grow up with the mindset that no one has a say in their lifestyle because what they do is “nobody’s business.” More so, the implication of choosing individualism over communalism is that person will no longer be perceptive to the wails and cries of their neighbours. This manifests in an accident situation where people are expected to save the victims, rather they are eager to use their smartphones to capture the event so that they might be regarded as the first person that broadcast the news.

Post-truth ideology of respect is commonly communicated with the statement, “Who does greeting help? This is 21st century.” The statement, “This is 21st century” is the umbrella term that introduces many post-truth discourses. Its synonym is, “It is none of your business.” A young man will be corrected for not greeting his/her elder or observing the societal honorific gestures, instead of feeling apologetic, he/she is supposed to utter, “Who does greeting help?” This statement lacks practical or logical reasoning. In this case, individualism has taken over communalism. Elders are *nominated* in the post-truth era as people who deserve no respect because respect is not ‘obtainable’ in the 21st century. Most of the youths aim for things that bring quick money and that explains the reason why in (9), some people abandon their language and if asked why they do not speak their mother tongue, the response is mostly: “Does it bring money?” This ideology reveals the reason why many youths indulge in immoral activities just to make money.

Post-truth ideologies can as well be seen in non-participating in immoral activities (12) and fidelity in marriage (13). In the olden days, *mgbe elu ka bu ala ọsa*, morality is fairly rewarded and fidelity upheld to a great extent. But in the post-truth era, anyone found living an ideal moral life is most of the times regarded as a 20th century being. A lady who does not dress indecently is addressed as *mgbeke* ‘a village girl,’ while a guy who does not involve in sexual escapades is referred to as a *Jew man*. Bad things reoccur and they are transmogrifying to acceptable tradition. Alternate truths are brandished as facts and they are gaining rapid acceptance.

However, it is worthy to note here that out of the sample population, over 75% of the youths have embraced post-truth, which they showcase with their actions and *locutionary acts*. From this, their ideological perspective is moving away from laid down traditional values and norms to alternate truths emanating from emotions and feelings. From the older generation, 20% has bought the idea of post-truth and reveal their ideologies through discourses that

contain post-truth. This category of people lies even when they are regarded as authorities to provide serenity in conflicting situations.

Agents of Post-truth Dissemination in Aba

Based on the observation and from the pieces of information gathered from participant observation, one agent of post-truth dissemination that is prominent in Aba is the social media. An average youth in Aba has a smartphone or at worst, a phone that can access Facebook. Due to the uncensored nature of the social media, most people assimilate hook, line and sinker most of the contents in social media whether they are true or false. These contents are circulated in a twinkle of an eye and before one could imagine, it has become a new way of life. Sometimes, post-truth elements are mixed with facts. In most cases, people cannot separate lies from truth. This problem is in line with Alfred Lord Tennyson's assertion that "A lie, which is all a lie, may be met and fought outright, but a lie, which is part of truth, is a harder matter to fight." Irrespective of this, lies will remain lies even when camouflaged as truth.

In addition, music and movies contribute in the dissemination of post-truth in Aba. The lyrics of some music negate societal norm. The same applies for movies. In some cases, immorality is glorified. Societal values and norms are degraded. The implication of this is that most people who do not have a say in their life begin to think that what they have heard and/or saw is the right way of living. The people's way of life is changed from facts to alternative facts. In some cultures, some behaviours might be acceptable but unacceptable in the Igbo culture. By watching a movie that showcased the way of life of another culture, some inhabitants of Aba begin to think that all cultures are the same, hence incorporate what they have seen in their day-to-day activities. Interpersonal relationship is also an identified agent of post-truth dissemination in Aba. In most cases, when someone who has not been overtaken by post-truth ideology begins to relate with persons that are grounded in post-truth ideologies and discourses, with time, the person is influenced.

Conclusion

In this paper, post-truth ideologies and the way they are communicated in Aba have been investigated through the discourse historical analysis model of Reisigl and Wodak (2009). From the research, fifteen (15) specific contents/topics were identified. Some of these specific topics include: exam malpractice, premarital sex, fraud/duping, advising, giving alms, and standing for the truth. By juxtaposing the reactions of people to these topics in the 20th century and the 21st century, it was discovered that the discourses of the 21st century are characterised mainly by post-truth ideologies.

The findings of the paper also reveal that the post-truth discourses lack argumentation, which makes them to be fallacious. More so, the perspectivisation is ideological, which emanates from emotions and feelings. The paper also discovers that the recurring clues of post-truth discourses are the following statements: "It depends on how you see it," "We are in the 21st

century,” “What if...,” “Mind your business,” “That one concerns you,” and “Who does it help?”

From the answers provided for the third research questions in this work, it was discovered that the social media, movies and music, interpersonal communication constitute agents of post-truth dissemination in Aba. In addition, the research discovers that post-truth ideologies are mainly communicated by youths - males and females inclusive. Adults also engage in communicating post-truth ideologies. Sequel to the above findings, the paper concludes that post-truth era is gaining grounds in Aba, as the ideologies of some people are being transformed from arguing with facts to arguing with prejudiced mindset, thereby creating an alternate truth. In line with the Igbo proverb which says that when a bad thing is frequently repeated, it becomes a tradition; if nothing is done, post-truth ideologies will overshadow the truths.

As an attempt to circumvent this impending catastrophe, good cultural norms and traditions must be upheld by all and sundry. The right teachings of religion must be espoused and practised. More so, the right ways of living must be handed down to next generations so that they will be able to stand firm to what is right, which will be demonstrated in the way they minimise the circulation of lies on the one hand, and remain unshaken in the post-truth era on the other hand. Finally, post-truth ideologies should not be embraced in Nigerian societies because they do conform to African belief systems in general.

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