

Naming and Describing in Pastor Sam Adeyemi's *Nigeria of My Dream*

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Abstract

Nigeria's socio-political realities have created a rich tradition of motivational discourse in which Pentecostal pastors articulate visions of national transformation. This study investigates how naming and describing, a critical stylistic device, is employed in Pastor Sam Adeyemi's motivational book, *Nigeria of My Dream*, to construct and propagate an ideology of national transformation. Drawing on Lesley Jeffries' Critical Stylistics, eleven excerpts purposively selected from the introduction and the book's five chapters were analysed qualitatively to examine the ideological functions of choice of nouns, noun modification, and nominalisation. The analysis reveals that choice of nouns portrays a country in progress, noun modification projects an envisioned future, and nominalisation condenses complex social processes and civic realities into rhetorically charged nominal forms. These strategies, combined with temporal and spatial framing, ideologically position readers to align with Adeyemi's vision of transformation. The study thus contributes to the study of motivational religious discourse in Nigeria by showing how choice of nouns, noun modification and nominalisation function as ideological resources in a written motivational text, thereby extending critical stylistic research beyond sermons and political speeches.

Keywords: *Naming and describing, critical stylistics, Pastor Sam Adeyemi, Nigeria of My Dream, motivational discourse, ideology.*

1 Introduction

There is an emerging scholarly interest in the relationship between religion and socio-political discourse in Nigeria, particularly in how religious leaders use language to mediate national issues. Adetunji (2026) identifies motivational writing as one of the most visible forms of such intervention. Some Pentecostal pastors leverage this genre to extend their influence beyond the pulpit into the public sphere, addressing civic, economic, and developmental concerns. Like all texts, these writings are not ideologically neutral; rather, they serve as deliberate tools for shaping worldviews, negotiating identities, and inspiring action (Jeffries, 2023). This ideological potential provides the motivation for the present study.

Pastor Sam Adeyemi, founder and Senior Pastor of Daystar Christian Centre in Lagos, is a prominent Nigerian Pentecostal leader whose writings articulate a rhetoric of national transformation. Described by New Man (2023) as a gospel preacher and

motivational speaker, Adeyemi has authored several widely read books, most notably *Nigeria of My Dream*. The book presents a cohesive rhetorical vision for the country grounded in integrity, visionary leadership, cultural reinvention, and civic responsibility. Its stylistic features directly reflect the author's ideology and urge readers to adopt his vision for national renewal.

This study examines the Critical Stylistic tools of naming and describing in *Nigeria of My Dream*. As theorized by Jeffries (2010), naming and describing encompass three interconnected linguistic practices: noun selection, pre- and post-modification, and nominalization. Jeffries (2010, p. 20) defines these as a "broad descriptive term covering several linguistic practices" through which authors "frame the world in ideologically significant ways." Analyzing these mechanisms in Adeyemi's work illuminates how language functions as a rhetorical tool to advance a transformative national vision.

National transformation entails structural political, economic, social, cultural, and institutional change. While scholars acknowledge that the concept admits multiple interpretations, they agree that substantive change remains its defining theme (Nicolaides & Eschenbacher, 2022; McClain, 2024). Deliberate transformation requires active engagement from governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and citizens to reconfigure social systems (Moore et al., 2021) - underscoring that national renewal is a collective effort rather than an elite project. Transformation discourse is closely linked to leadership, with scholars characterizing transformational leadership as a reciprocal process wherein leaders and followers influence one another toward higher morality and motivation (Mitra, 2013; AlAfnan & Dishari, 2024). Furthermore, research on Nigerian political discourse shows that persuasive rhetoric strategically shapes knowledge to present specific versions of reality. Transformation narratives are never neutral; they are sites of ideological contestation where language legitimates competing visions of nationhood (Adegoju, 2023). Consequently, the rhetoric of national transformation employed by figures like Pastor Sam Adeyemi is best understood through the lens of language and collective vision (Hölscher et al., 2018).

1.1 Statement of the problem

There is a rich scholarship on the religion-society interface in Nigeria which demonstrates the growing engagement of religious actors in Nigeria's national issues. Although the spoken discourse of Nigerian Pentecostal pastors has been studied (Kamalu & Tamunobelem, 2015; Robbin & Adelakun, 2022), little focus has been placed on the written motivational discourse of Nigerian Pentecostal pastors. The relationship between religion and politics (Onapajo, 2012; Burgess, 2013); the use of religious language in

building civic consciousness (Emeka-Nwobia, 2015), and the roles of Pentecostal pastors in democratic consolidation (Adegoju & Adetunji, 2019) have also been examined by scholars. Other studies have investigated a variety of rhetorical, ideological and stylistic issues including Adeyanju (2008) who investigates the stylo-semantic elements of Pastor Adeboye's New Year compliments, which shows the conscious manipulation of linguistic and literary resources for thematising and spiritualising the message. Al-Shemmery (2020) also uses Critical Stylistics on selected American sermons to discover the naming, contrasting, and metaphorisation in the process of threading ideology. The direction of these studies, however, has been on spoken discourse, sermons, political speeches, and public addresses, while none has specifically investigated the naming and describing practices in the motivational writing of a Nigerian Pentecostal pastor.

Even though Adetunji (2026) examined the rhetoric of economic emancipation in Pastor Adeyemi's motivational book, *The Parable of Dollars*, the paper applied a different theoretical insight – Aristotle's Rhetoric – to the analysis and did not consider the inherent ideologies. This study fills this gap in the current scholarship. Moreover, the analysis of the naming practices of a well-known pastor-author whose texts have a wide audience helps to understand how religious leaders contribute to the process of national identity and civic consciousness through language. This study thus stands as an interface between linguistics, religion and socio-political discourse.

2 Literature review

This section reviews relevant studies from both conceptual and empirical perspectives in order to situate the present study within existing scholarship.

2.1 Motivational discourse

Motivational discourse is a purposeful genre that has a communicative purpose of changing the beliefs, attitudes, or actions of an audience (Sherwani, 2020). Bhatia (2014) places such discourse in the realm of promotional genres, claiming that texts of this nature take persuasive techniques from advertising and self-help writing to create an aspirational bond between writer and reader. Motivational texts always call for change, that is a change towards a particular value-laden vision of an ideal life (Yerznkyan and Harutyunyan, 2024). Adetunji (2026) argues that Nigerian Pentecostal tradition is not restricted to doctrinal or liturgical religious writing. Through motivational writing, the voice of the pastor is extended from the pulpit to the printed page. This combines the authority of the religious message with the rhetoric of self-improvement.

2.2 Ideology

In the critical linguistic tradition, ideology is defined as a set of beliefs and values that is embedded in the naturalised and common-sensical language of a text, and that is often not explicitly stated in the text but rather is assumed by the reader (Fairclough, 2001). van Dijk (2001) conceptualises ideology as a shared set of social cognitions between discourse and social structure that is experienced by group members. It is important to note that ideology is always linked to power, as it is usually the discourse of the dominant groups that is seen as neutral (Wodak, 2002). Jeffries (2010) applies this insight to the linguistic features of a text, such as the choice of names and description, as textual traces of a writer's ideological positioning.

2.3 Empirical review

Research into the relationship between religion and national discourse in Nigeria has focused on various aspects of the use of language in the engagement of national discourse by religious actors. Burgess (2013) examines the role of the Nigerian Pentecostal movement on civic engagement, and reports a dramatic trend that has seen the pastor become the social and political activist. This is confirmed by Gaiya (2015), who studies how charismatic Pentecostal churches in Lagos meet social and political problems not only spiritually, but also in concrete ways. These studies provide the general background which makes *Nigeria of My Dream* by a pastor author possible.

In the study of religious discourse in Nigeria, several frameworks have been used in the linguistic analysis of religious texts. Adeyanju (2008) employs Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFG) to uncover how the writer of the greeting card, Pastor Adeboye, weaves the themes of spiritual accountability and transience in the text. By employing Critical Discourse Analysis, Emeka-Nwobia (2015) demonstrates how President Obasanjo's use of religious language in his political speeches helped to create rapport, elicit emotions and to subtly connect listeners with his political ideologies. Using Halliday's SFG, Osasona (2017) examines Pastor Tunde Bakare's messages as a tool of emancipation of the society with specific emphasis on the criticism of economic mismanagement and corruption. The Critical Stylistics framework is applied to Bakare's political teachings by Adegoju and Adetunji (2019) whose focus is on the use of naming and describing, enumeration, equating and contrasting, and representing time and space to thread the ideology of leadership-citizenship responsiveness for democratic consolidation.

Al-Shemmery (2020) found that the use of naming, contrasting and metaphors as encoding devices of ideology, and how these devices were used by the preachers, was influenced by their religiosity and cultural-ideological stances including racism and

globalism in selected American sermons, using Jeffries' Critical Stylistics framework. This study shows the analytical value of Critical Stylistics for religious discourse, but is limited to an American context and does not deal with motivational books as a genre. With the pragmatic act theory of Jacob Mey, Robbin and Adelokun (2022) analyse Bishop Oyedepo's sermons and uncover the pragmatic acts of assuring, informing and re-enlightening. Their findings reveal the versatility of Bishop Oyedepo's discourse in that it is able to tackle human pursuits in a similar thematic fashion as *Nigeria of My Dream* is dealing with civic and developmental issues. Adetunji (2026) conducts a rhetorical-stylistic analysis of Pastor Sam Adeyemi's *The Parable of Dollars* through Aristotle's appeals of logos, pathos and ethos. The study links Pentecostal motivational discourse with financial literacy and socio-economic transformation in Nigeria. It reveals that Pastor Adeyemi advocates for planning, enthusiasm, positive thinking, savings and investment, and philanthropy, while denouncing corrupt authorities. The pastor packages stylistic devices of metaphors, antithesis, repetition, parallelism, imagery and metonymy into the three rhetoric proofs in order to persuade.

While these studies from varying theoretical approaches have descriptively accounted for linguistic devices found in a text, this study, on the other hand, extends Jeffries' toolkit of naming and describing in connection to temporal/spatial framing, thus showing how the framework can be used to explain the ideological work that a text performs, within the context of Nigerian Pentecostal motivational discourse. Ultimately, this fosters critical language awareness within the Nigerian public sphere, to the end that scholars and citizens alike are able to interrogate the narratives that define their socio-political reality.

3 Methodology

This study utilises the data obtained from Pastor Sam Adeyemi's book, *Nigeria of My Dream*. The book has five chapters including the introduction and four main chapters viz., 'What is the Nigerian Dream?' (Chapter One), 'The Power of Dream' (Chapter Two), Cultural Revolution (Chapter Three), Be a Change Agent (Chapter Four), and The New Nigeria (Chapter Five). The book is 105 pages long, and it is a sustained rhetorical advocacy for national transformation, based on values of integrity, visionary leadership, and civic responsibility.

The research design used in this study is a descriptive qualitative research design which follows Creswell and Poth's (2018) recommendation for using qualitative research design in studying linguistic and rhetorical phenomena. The criterion-based purposive sampling method (Paltridge & Starfield, 2019) was used to guide data selection, where

excerpts were chosen that were directly relevant to the practices of naming and describing that were the focus of the study. In this study, eleven extracts are analysed from across chapters of the book. The excerpts were selected from the entire text by close reading, which allowed for patterns of noun selection, modification and nominalisation to be identified on a comprehensive level.

3.1 Theoretical framework

This study uses Lesley Jeffries' Critical Stylistics (CS) as its theoretical approach. CS is located at the intersection of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and stylistics. CDA focuses on the construction of ideology and power relations in language use (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2002; van Dijk, 2001), and stylistics provides a principled linguistic perspective on the understanding of how texts create meaning and how they affect readers. CS merges these two orientations; that is, 'CDA's use of general theories to explain the effects that texts can have within a social and political context, and stylistics, which offers tools of linguistic analysis' (Adegoju & Famakinwa, 2018: 138).

Jeffries (2010) suggests ten analytical tools that can be used to discover ideology in texts, namely: naming and describing; representing actions, states and events; equating and contrasting; exemplifying and enumerating; prioritising; assuming and implying; negating; hypothesising; presenting other people's speech and thought; representing time, space and society. The present study concentrates in particular on naming and describing, among these. According to Jeffries (2010: 20), naming is 'a general term for description of a variety of linguistic practices'. As Jeffries (2014: 408) explains, 'naming' and 'describing' are essential activities of texts that allow authors to 'categorise' and 'frame' their subjects in particular ways, which in turn influence readers' 'understandings' and 'attitudes' towards the subjects.

The three dimensions of naming and describing are: (1) choice of noun: selecting from a range of possible nouns, which reflects ideology, both positive and negative; (2) noun modification: qualifying a noun by pre- and post-modification techniques, which adds ideological layers to the meaning of a noun; and (3) nominalisation: transforming verbs or adjectives into nouns, which abstracts actions and processes into concepts or states, and thereby produces ideological effects, especially by de-dynamising the original verb and presupposing the existence of the nominalised entity (Jeffries, 2010). The study builds on the CS framework by adding Halliday's (2004) concept of the rank scale in SFG, which accounts for how lower ranked units in the system (e.g. prepositional phrases) can be rank-shifted to serve as constituents within a nominal group. The analysis is carried out by describing the formal linguistic characteristics of the selected extracts and interpreting

the ideological meanings that they create, based on the description-interpretation dimensions of CDA proposed by Fairclough (2001).

4 Analysis

In this section, the extracts are interpreted and explained in relation to the objective of the study and the theoretical framework. The functions of identified textual features are analysed and their contribution to meaning and ideology is discussed. Before proceeding with the analysis, however, a synopsis of the book is first given in order to contextualise the subsequent analysis.

4.1 Synopsis of *Nigeria of My Dream*

In the Introduction Chapter, the book describes itself as a proposal to develop a new concept that will define Nigeria and predict its future. It states that having a dream is a foundational principle for success. It states the book's aim is to get readers to agree on a vision, and to examine cultural values and beliefs. Chapter One states that a dream is a mental picture of how something should be, and that imagination shapes reality. It states that intangible resources control the allocation of tangible resources, that most Nigerians live below the poverty line, and that a new dream is evolving for the country. Chapter Two explains that a dream becomes the basis for decisions, determines direction, affects actions and behaviour, gives hope, and provides a basis for unity. It states that foreigners cannot develop Nigeria, and that Nigerians must project fifty and one hundred years ahead in the same direction.

In Chapter Three, the author states that the causes of Nigeria's slow development are cultural. It covers value for life, time as a resource, management of resources, productive relationships, leadership, citizenship, law and order, culture of excellence, belief systems, mental sophistication, and the educational system, closing with suggestions on wealth creation, employment, and savings. The Fourth Chapter references Nelson Mandela's tribute to Walter Sisulu. It lists characteristics of change agents: a sense of divine purpose, deployment of talents, foresight, insight, communication, dependence on God, desire for change, cooperation with others, willingness to pay the price, and a record of success. Finally, Chapter Five presents a first-person account describing a new and developed Nigeria with modern cities, airports, power supply, shopping malls, farmlands, food industries, schools, universities, residential and commercial buildings, tourism, businesses, political leadership, internet connectivity, and a postal system.

4.2 Framing a nation in progress through Choice of Nouns

The use of some specific nouns by Pastor Adeyemi in *Nigeria of My Dream* is an intentional ideological approach to positioning Nigeria as a country that is poised for change. As Jeffries (2010: 20) describes, the function of the choice of nouns is to encode complex ideas, ideologies and emotional resonance which influences reader perception. Here are some examples of this practice:

Excerpt 1:

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." Having a dream (a mental picture of a preferable future) is a foundational principle for success. (p. 7)

The first gesture in the book is the introduction by Pastor Adeyemi of the key nouns that form the basis of his national story. The noun 'proposal' is used to capture the essence of the book as an invitation to co-conceive a transformed nation, and places the reader more in the role of a willing participant than a passive recipient. The noun 'encouragement' is used as a name for the current project of writing, which is conceived as an act of positive reinforcement, with the aim of collective imagining. The nouns 'dream' and 'future' are especially relevant. These two nominal choices create a psycho-temporal frame in which 'dream' names a mental representation located in the mind of the reader and 'future' names a point in time that the reader is invited to move towards.

Excerpt 2:

It is intended to also challenge us to examine our culture to identify the values and beliefs that can frustrate our journey to development so we can change them. (p. 8)

The nouns 'culture,' 'values,' and 'beliefs' point to the internal aspects of transformation that Adeyemi says need to be looked at and changed. The author explicitly points to the significance of these aspects in the national change narrative by naming them. The nouns are not evaluatively neutral; they are accompanied by the implication that certain cultural elements can 'frustrate' the developmental process, thus implying an ideology that links cultural mentality to the progress or retrogression of the nation. The naming of these elements makes them available for critique, and sets the discursive groundwork for the cultural revolution that the book calls for in Chapter Three.

Moreover, the headword of the nominal phrase 'our journey to development' recasts national development as movement through time along a path. In essence, Nigeria

is positioned somewhere between a point of departure, the present, marked by frustrating cultural values, and a point of arrival, development, an implicitly future and spatial destination. Together, these choices construct an expectation in the reader's mind, orienting their sense of self towards a future state of national arrival, and also carries an ideological implication of recruiting the reader's emotional investment in the journey that the author proposes.

Excerpt 3:

We do not understand that leadership is about service. In Africa, the community or government dominates individuals, making them feel powerless. This is one of the reasons democracy is not working yet. In a democracy, you respect the right that God has given to each individual. Power resides in the individual who willingly delegates some of it to the state. Being a leader only gives you the opportunity to serve powerful citizens, and influencing powerful people gives you power. Being a dictator over powerless citizens makes a leader worthless. Until the average Nigerian is empowered and his or her potentials are unleashed, our leaders will not be respected on the global scene. (p. 56)

As earlier mentioned, the author's rhetoric in Chapter Three as shown in Excerpt 3 above demands cultural revolution. The nominal choices serve to describe the social roles and relationships that are at the heart of Adeyemi's conception of a new Nigeria. The lexemes 'leadership', 'service', 'democracy', 'individual', 'Nigerian', and 'citizens' are a few of the nouns that are intentional constructs through which the text producer charts the social space of the new Nigeria. The juxtaposition of powerless citizens and powerful citizens is particularly loaded with ideology, creating a contrast between the state of Nigerian people today and the envisioned empowered Nigerian people. The naming strategy's ideological potential is further illustrated by the choice of 'dictator' versus 'leader': one noun represents oppression, the other legitimacy. Adeyemi identifies the key social actors, the leaders and the citizens, and defines their responsibilities, laying a foundation for the relationship between the two as the backbone of the new Nigeria, and invoking the principle of legitimacy in political science. This naming instils a feeling of ownership and shared responsibility among readers, consistent with Kachur's (2021) scholarship on the power of language in creating social reality.

The time marker 'until' defers respect on the global stage for the nominal entity 'the average Nigerian' to an unspecified future point contingent on the states of being 'empowered' and having potentials 'unleashed'. The noun 'potentials' is equally an instance of nominalisation. From the adjective 'potential', it embodies an abstract quality

into a countable object, thereby presupposing that these potentials are already existing and merely await release. Significantly, as well, the sentence never specifies who is to unleash these potentials. This is an agentless construction that names a desirable future state without assigning responsibility for bringing it about.

4.3 Describing the envisioned Nigeria through Noun Modification

Noun modification is the process of qualifying nouns with pre- and post-modification to give or add additional ideological information about the headword. Noun modification plays a crucial role in ‘packaging up’ information for ideological purposes (Jeffries, 2010: 22). Modifiers ‘work to produce ideological effects’ by adding layers to the information that affect readers’ perception (Coffey, 2013: 119). In *Nigeria of My Dream*, Pastor Adeyemi uses a wealth of adjectives, noun phrases, and prepositional phrases as modifiers to describe both Nigeria that he criticises and Nigeria that he envisions. Table 1 shows some of the examples from the text that were captured:

Table 1: Describing through Noun Modification

Pre-modifiers	Headword	Post-modifiers	Source
<i>the (definite article)</i>	dream (noun)	of a developed nation (prep. group)	p. 7
<i>a (indef. article) + developed (adj.)</i>	nation (noun)	—	p. 7
<i>a (indef. article) + preferable (adj.)</i>	future (noun)	—	p. 7
<i>a (indef. article) + foundational (adj.)</i>	principle (noun)	for success (prep. group)	p. 7
<i>a (indef. article) + new (adj.)</i>	Nigeria (noun)	—	p. 22
<i>developed (adj.)</i>	Nigeria (noun)	—	p. 22
<i>this (demonstrative) + new (adj.)</i>	Nigeria	—	p. 99
<i>modern (adj.) + specially developed (adj.)</i>	seeds (noun)	—	p. 101

Pre-modifiers	Headword	Post-modifiers	Source
<i>large (adj.)</i>	farmlands (noun)	cultivated with modern equipment (part. phrase)	p. 101

Source: Researcher, 2026

In Table 1, the post-modifiers illustrate the idea of rank shifting in SFG: a grammatical unit is a constituent of another unit of the same or lower rank. The table shows that the prepositional groups are rank-shifted to become constituents of the nominal groups, which is explained by Halliday's (2004) hierarchy of grammatical units based on size, the rank scale. Excerpts from the book are now closely examined to bring to light the naming strategies that are at play.

Excerpt 4:

We must have the dream of a developed nation. (p. 7)

The nominal phrase 'the dream of a developed nation' is built around the noun 'dream', which is pre-modified by the definite article 'the' to particularise the ambition being expressed, and post-modified by the prepositional phrase 'of a developed nation', which contains the noun phrase 'a developed nation'. The adjective 'developed' is the ideological modifier in this embedded noun phrase. The word 'developed' qualifies the term 'nation' and gives Nigeria a future-oriented quality, thus indirectly comparing the future developed state with the country's present state of being developing or underdeveloped. The modification then serves a clear benchmark-setting function, setting the goal of comprehensive growth, economic, social and infrastructural, and directing the discourse towards progress and maturity.

Excerpt 5:

Having a dream (a mental picture of a preferable future) is a foundational principle for success. (p. 7)

The addition of the adjective 'foundational' to the noun 'principle' carries an ideological freight in this excerpt as it elevates visionary thinking from being a useful disposition to the very foundation that national progress needs to be built. The term 'foundational' is used not just descriptively; it asserts the primacy and necessity of the quality named. Likewise, the adjective 'preferable' used to qualify the noun 'future' conveys the envisioned future as one of greater value, not just possible but preferable. These changes go hand in hand to strengthen the need of vision for transformation. The modification here follows Jeffries'

(2010: 22) observation that 'noun modification can 'pack' ideas into noun phrases in ways that are 'not easily challenged' by the reader, and thus can encode ideology in subtle but powerful ways.

Excerpt 6:

I see a new and developed Nigeria. In this new Nigeria, our cities have evolved into modern ones. (p. 99)

The pre-modifiers 'new' and 'developed' are used in conjunction with 'Nigeria' and have a number of ideological functions. First, they set a clear time and quality difference between Nigeria today and the Nigeria envisioned for the future, making the future Nigeria qualitatively different from the present Nigeria. Secondly, they create an expectation of hope and anticipation in the reader that they will get to see a Nigeria that has overcome the current challenges. The same excerpt, and the same vision of progress and modernisation, is extended beyond the abstract to the concretely spatial by the use of the modifier 'modern' on Nigerian cities. These changes, taken together, create a compelling vision of national change, one that is more than just a political slogan, it is a call to the reader's imagination.

Notably, the demonstrative 'this' is usually used to point to something in the immediate and present context, but here it points to a Nigeria that does not yet exist. Thus, this proximal deictic anchor ideologically collapses the distance between the reader's present and the author's imagined future. In other words, it invites the readers to experience the future as though it were already here.

Excerpt 7:

I see large farmlands, cultivated with modern equipment, sowed with specially developed seeds and bringing forth multiple times the yield we get per hectare now. I see large food manufacturing industries, processing food for both the local and export markets. (p. 101)

The repeated use of the word 'large' in the two sentences is stylistically intentional to highlight the scope of expansion that is envisaged for Nigeria's agriculture and manufacturing sector. The phrase 'specially developed' (modifying 'seeds') implies a deliberate effort and innovation in technology, deviating from the usual agricultural methods that might have limited productivity. The text producer provides technical details: the type of equipment 'modern' and the nature of the seeds 'specially developed'. This is a picture of an efficient and forward-looking agriculture. The noun modifications are important tools for the sectoral discourse of national transformation in giving ideologically charged detail, which enhances the rhetorical power of the vision.

4.4 Condensing national realities into noun forms through Nominalisation

The process whereby verbs or adjectives are converted to nouns is called nominalisation and it abstracts dynamic actions and processes into conceptual 'static' entities. According to Jeffries (2010: 25), nominalisation is a technique that converts an entire sentence into a noun phrase, which is used to focus on the process rather than the action. This transformation has ideological implications: it reduces multi-faceted social reality to short nominal phrases, which may be more or less agentless, and often treat the nominalised concept as a presupposed fact. The following excerpts illustrate Adeyemi's use of nominalisation in *Nigeria of My Dream* in a strategic manner.

Excerpt 8:

Intangible resources control the allocation of tangible resources. (p. 18)

The use of the term 'the allocation of tangible resources' is a nominalisation of the process expressed by the verb 'allocate'. The sentence that is supposed to be the underlying sentence would be: Tangible resources are allocated by intangible resources. Adeyemi abstracts the complex dynamic process to a noun phrase, which is an analytical concept that captures the interaction of various resources types. The nominalisation takes away agency from the statement (who is allocating and how), and instead shifts the focus to allocation as a systemic phenomenon. It is a stylistic move that has ideological implications, since it represents resource distribution as a structural reality rather than as a political or governmental action, a product of intangible assets, like knowledge, vision and values. The text thus embeds the ideology that the development of the nation is not about material wealth but about intangible gifts. Leaning on Fairclough's (2001) lens, the agency deletion in the nominalisation also omits any human or institutional agent who might be held accountable for how resources are allocated in the country. This silence has ideological implication for a text that intends to locate the causes of underdevelopment in intangible, non-political factors rather than solely in governance.

Excerpt 9:

Visiting developed world has helped me to realize that there is a better way to live, and that many of the things that we consider luxuries in Nigeria are necessities which can be enjoyed by the average citizen. We are suffering indignities unnecessarily. (p. 20)

The gerundive nominalisation of the action of visiting in this extract is used to create a meaningful experience of visiting, and to capture the action and its deeper cognitive effect in one nominal structure. The nominalisation does not tell a story about the visit but makes

it a conceptual object, so that its impact, in this case the realisation of a better way of living, is what is highlighted. This is ideologically important because it makes the personal experience of the pastor into a general statement about the benefits of international exposure in developing consciousness. The 'we are suffering indignities unnecessarily' then becomes an evaluation with a rhetorical charge: Nigeria's condition of deprivation is due to a lack of the kind of enlightened perspective that this exposure can produce.

Excerpt 10:

The creation of a new Nigeria must begin with a new vision... The creation of a better future in your imagination includes the creation of a new you. (pp. 22-23)

The nominalisation of the term 'creation' is of stylistic and ideological interest in this extract. The three uses of 'creation' – 'the creation of a new Nigeria', 'the creation of a better future', and 'the creation of a new you' produce the concept of 'creating' as a single set of goals. These would be verbalised as: 'A new Nigeria is being created,' 'A better future is being created,' and 'A new you is being created.' The text nominalises these processes and shifts the emphasis from continuous process to achieved concept, thus making transformation an end, a conscious, and attainable end. The repetition of creation also creates a rhetorical parallelism that equates three kinds of transformation: national, temporal, and personal, and puts the reader at once as agent and subject of the transformation being called for. This is in line with Jeffries' (2010: 25) remark that the nominalisation of a transformation implies that it exists and that it is desirable.

Excerpt 11:

Several years ago, there was a case of kidnapping and assassination in Owerri, Nigeria. It was called the 'Otokoto' saga in the media. A young boy was missing until the police arrested a man with a bag. They found on him the freshly severed head of this young boy still dripping with blood. After interrogation and investigation, it was discovered that those who ordered the killing were people considered rich and powerful in the society. (p. 41)

The following extract illustrates a particular form of nominalisation, which Jeffries (2010: 27) calls 'naturalised', namely nominal structures which cannot be easily broken down into their underlying sentences without losing in specificity or gravity. The nominalisation of the verbs kidnap, assassinate, interrogate and investigate are naturalised processes or events, in which the words' verbal nature is preserved but the dynamic nature is hidden. These nominalisations have three rhetorical functions in one. They condense the story, so that the text producer can refer to key events efficiently. Second, they stir deep emotions

because of the connotations of the nouns: violent crime, the government's involvement, and the violation of trust among the community. Third, they highlight the systemic nature of Nigeria's problems by identifying their expressions as recognisable and recurring forms of social failure. The ideological role here is to create a foundation of negative social reality which gives the imagined transformed Nigeria significance and moral urgency.

5 Conclusion

This paper examined how naming and describing construct ideas in Pastor Sam Adeyemi's *Nigeria of My Dream*. The analysis shows that naming forms a rhetorical system carrying a transformative ideology designed to position readers toward national renewal. Specifically, noun choices identify key participants, obstacles, and goals in the national narrative, framing the reader as an active agent of change. Noun modifications add evaluative and future-oriented dimensions, serving as the text's most pervasive strategy. Conversely, nominalization condenses processes into abstract forms and obscures agency, leaving those responsible for Nigeria's current state unnamed. Integrated within a spatiotemporal framework, these strategies project Nigeria as moving from a deficient present to a desirable future, continually closing the distance between that vision and the reader's reality.

These results demonstrate Critical Stylistics' ability to explain not just *what* devices a text uses, but *why* it sequences them. This progression - from naming problems, to evaluating them, to abstracting change without assigning blame - offers a template for analyzing other Nigerian religious and motivational texts. While scholars acknowledge Pentecostal pastors as socio-political actors (Burgess, 2013; Gaiya, 2015; Onapajo, 2012), this study details the specific linguistic mechanism enabling that role in print. This supports Adegoju's (2023) view that transformation narratives are sites of ideological contestation, extending that insight from political rebranding to Pentecostal literature. Ultimately, the strategies form a coherent linguistic architecture for Adeyemi's rhetoric of national transformation. The study highlights the power of Critical Stylistics in revealing the ideological effects of motivational writing, addressing an understudied area at the intersection of applied linguistics, religion, and national discourse in Nigeria.

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