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**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF “WEEP NIGERIA” AND
JA’AFARU’S “ECONOMIC HARDSHIP IN NIGERIA”**

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ABSTRACT

This research carried out a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Jamilu Ja'afaru's Economic Hardship in Nigeria and Chinedu Nnadi Nwangwu's Weep Nigeria to critically analyze how the poetic language constructs and critiques the socio-political condition of Nigeria. Picking up its cues from Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model, the research investigated the textual, discursive, and social practice levels of the poems. A qualitative exploratory research design was used, where major stanzas were purposively chosen and read for their figurative language, ideological alignment, and socio-political critique. The research indicates the two poets use metaphor, personification, symbolism, and rhetorical question in portrayal of national grieving, economic downturn, and political disillusionment. Discursively, the poems are counter-narratives, challenging hegemonic state speech, unveiling corruption, and satirizing selective government action towards crises. At the social practice level, they redefine individual suffering as public experience, addressing readers in a call to action and resistance. Nigerian poetry is recognized by the study as a powerful socio-political instrument, moving between experience and critique and giving voice to public grievance. CDA succeeds in unearthing hidden power relations and producing critical awareness, pointing to poetry's potential for the creation of solidarity and provoking a narrative of survival and national rebirth.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Weep Nigeria, and Economic Hardship in Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has been overwhelmed by a series of socio-economic crises, including widespread insecurity, hunger, weak healthcare systems, rising unemployment, and falling national income. These issues have become increasingly dire, with inflation rates exceeding 20%, over 30 million citizens experiencing food insecurity, and youth unemployment deepening the sense of despair among the population (Reuters, 2025; RSIS International, 2025). According to *The Guardian Nigeria* (2025), the removal of fuel subsidies has triggered a sharp increase in transportation and food prices, exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis for millions of households. In urban centres such as Lagos, Kano, and Port Harcourt, rent hikes and rising school fees are pushing families further into poverty (*Daily Trust*, 2025).

Meanwhile, the power sector continues to underperform, with frequent blackouts affecting productivity and small-scale businesses (*Punch*, 2025). The healthcare system is in a state of disrepair, with overworked medical professionals protesting unpaid salaries and poor working conditions, as reported by *Premium Times* (2025). The education sector is also affected, with incessant strikes by university lecturers (ASUU) and underfunding of public schools, contributing to a growing skills gap among Nigerian youth (*The Guardian*, 2025). Moreover, incidents of mass abductions, banditry, and farmer-herder conflicts further destabilise rural livelihoods and threaten food production across the country (*Daily Trust*, 2025).

These compounded socio-economic problems have contributed to widespread frustration, disillusionment, and a growing sense of national decline. In response to these troubling conditions, many Nigerian poets and writers have turned to literature as a platform for social critique and national advocacy. Through poetic expressions, they aim to engage the

government and the wider public in conversations about the urgent need for reforms and interventions.

This study focuses on two contemporary Nigerian poems: Nwangwu's "Weep Nigeria" and Ja'afar's "Economic Hardship in Nigeria." These poems poignantly capture the prevailing mood of frustration, loss, and political disillusionment. Using evocative figurative language and thematic concerns centred on national decay, the poets highlight the urgent need for economic, political, educational, and cultural transformation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although numerous studies have applied Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in literary and linguistic research, Nigerian poets whose works criticise government policies and social injustices have not been given adequate scholarly attention. Such poets offer valuable insights into how language functions as a tool for exposing and resisting power structures within the Nigerian socio-political landscape. This study addresses this gap by analyzing Chinedu Nwangwu's "*Weep Nigeria*" and Jamilu Ja'afar's "*Economic Hardship in Nigeria*", exploring how the interplay of language, power, and ideology is constructed in poetic discourse.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of two poems *Weep Nigeria* by Nwangwu and *Economic Hardship in Nigeria* by Ja'afar. The specific objectives are to:

1. Analyse how figurative language in the poems reflects the relationship between language, power, and social context;

2. Explore the effectiveness of Critical Discourse Analysis in revealing the ideological leaning embedded in the poems;
3. Examine how these poets articulate public discontent and frame state policies within broader social and ideological frameworks.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does the use of figurative language in *Weep Nigeria* and *Economic Hardship in Nigeria* reflect the relationship between language, power, and social context?
2. In what ways does Critical Discourse Analysis enhance the understanding of the ideological stance embedded in the poems?
3. What types of figurative expressions are used in the poems, and how do they function to construct social critique?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant in several ways. First, it provides a critical analysis of Nigeria's socio-economic and political conditions as reflected in the selected poems, highlighting issues that require urgent policy intervention. Second, it demonstrates how poetry functions as a didactic tool for societal awareness and political transformation, particularly in the context of marginalised or less mainstream literary voices. Finally, the study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on Critical Discourse Analysis and literary studies by applying CDA to contemporary Nigerian poetry, thereby enriching interdisciplinary approaches to political discourse in literature.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to a Critical Discourse Analysis of two selected poems: Nwangwu's "*Weep Nigeria*" and Ja'afar's "*Economic Hardship in Nigeria*." The analysis focuses specifically on stanzas that reveal discursive representations of power, ideology, and socio-political critique. The study is restricted to the textual elements within these poems and will not extend to performance, reception, or biographical interpretations of the poets.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach that is dedicated to studying spoken, written and multimodal language with a focus on how discourse shapes and is shaped by power, ideology, and social practice (Fairclough and Wodak 258). Fairclough defines CDA as the examination of "the relationship between language and social processes" this exposes the role of discourse in sustaining or challenging power relations (9). Wodak and Meyer suggest that CDA regards language use, both oral and written, as an action embedded within and influenced by social structures and practices (5). This orientation positions CDA not merely as a linguistic tool but as a method for revealing how language becomes a vehicle for both domination and resistance.

Van Dijk concurs with Fairclough, Wodak and Meyer that CDA examines how discourse reproduces or resists social inequality, particularly by focusing on the "control of knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies" through text and talk (471). In the same vein, Habermas situates discourse within the broader framework of communicative action, arguing that the legitimacy of social order rests on open, rational dialogue free from coercion (Habermas 86). These perspectives converge on the view that CDA is inherently

critical, seeking to examine how language contributes to the maintenance or transformation of social structures.

Applied to literary texts, CDA reveals how poets utilise linguistic strategies to engage with political and social realities. McKee notes that cultural texts frequently encode ideological positions, and analysing them discursively enables researchers to “make sense of the relationships between culture, politics, and identity” (62). In the context of Nigerian poetry, CDA shows how figurative language, such as personification, symbolism, and irony, serves not merely as decoration but as a discursive tool against oppression and social injustice.

In this study, CDA provides the framework for examining Ja’afaru’s *Economic Hardship in Nigeria* and Nwangwu’s *Weep Nigeria*. Both poems employ figurative language to articulate shared frustration, critique governance, and give a voice to marginalised people. By analysing [these poems](#) through Fairclough’s three-dimensional model: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, this research uncovers the ideological tensions embedded in their verses. Ultimately, CDA serves as the bridge between the poets’ linguistic choices and the broader socio-political landscape they reflect.

Empirical review

The use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in literary studies has gained prominence over the years as scholars explore how language functions ideologically within texts. However, despite a growing body of work applying CDA to poetry, there remains a significant gap in the analysis of how contemporary Nigerian poets use poetic language to construct and critique national discourse, particularly regarding economic hardship and government authoritarianism.

Zaheer Faiza's study, *Critical Discourse Analysis of the Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)*, provides a panoramic view of the common man's struggles during the Victorian era, shaped by industrialisation, urbanisation, and the rise of Darwinian ideas. Faiza's work is valuable in showing how historical poetry reflects social realities. However, the focus is strictly on 19th-century British society and does not address contemporary African or Nigerian socio-political concerns. Thus, the present study contributes to the field by shifting the discourse to modern Nigeria, where the government's neglect of the masses and abuse of power are pressing issues captured in poetic form.

Similarly, the work of Faiz ul Hassan, Imran Nazeer, and Moon Ijaz, titled *A Critical Discourse Analysis of Mr. Gohar's Poetry 'Metaphors'*, examines the linguistic and stylistic features of a Pakistani poet's work. While the authors apply Fairclough's CDA framework and explore rhetorical techniques and underlying themes, their study is rooted in a different socio-political context and adopts a systematic sampling method. In contrast, the present research utilises a purposive qualitative sampling approach and focuses on Nigerian poetry that speaks directly to issues such as poverty, failed governance, and national decay. Hence, the thematic and methodological differences highlight the need for localised CDA applications in Nigerian literary discourse.

Ebim Abua Matthew's analysis of Niyi Osundare's "*Blues for the New Senate King*" focuses on the linguistic and stylistic features of satire in Nigerian poetry. His study connects literary criticism with linguistics and explores how Osundare uses poetic language to expose societal issues and advocate for reform. While Matthew's work is closely aligned with the present study in terms of geographical focus and socio-political themes, it employs a linguistic-stylistic approach rather than CDA. The current research fills this

methodological gap by applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model to two different poets, offering a broader and more theoretically grounded analysis of national discourse in Nigerian poetry.

Sharma Bam Dev's study on Simon Armitage's poem "*Shout*" divides the poem's linguistic elements into micro (textual) and macro (ideological) elements, demonstrating how language reflects power and ideology. While Sharma's research employs Fairclough's model and is structurally comparable, it is limited to a single British poem and does not consider the socio-economic and political realities of postcolonial African nations. The present study addresses this limitation by analysing how two Nigerian poets use language to critique systemic oppression, creating a more diverse and contextually relevant discourse analysis.

Ajjulus Gloria and Mafarhanatul Akmal Ahmad Kamal's research on symbolism in Shirley Lim's poetry employs CDA to explore gender discrimination within Malaysian cultural contexts. While this study shares an analytical framework with the current research, it focuses solely on symbolism and gender. In contrast, the present study examines a wider range of figurative devices, including personification, metaphor, and symbolism, used to represent national decay and economic hardship in Nigeria. Additionally, while Gloria and Kamal's study is situated within Southeast Asian cultural discourse, this research shifts the focus to West Africa, offering an essential contribution to understudied postcolonial narratives in Nigeria.

Finally, the work of Akingbe Niyi and Onaguga Ayodele Paul, titled *Poetics as Vocabulary of Resistance: A Linguistic Analysis of Ebinyo Ogbowei's Poetry*, provides an in-depth analysis of poetic resistance in the Niger Delta region. Using CDA, their study explores

how Ogbowei's poetry addresses environmental degradation and socio-political marginalisation. While their research aligns with the present study in its use of CDA and thematic concern with resistance, it is limited to a single poet and a region-specific context. The present research expands this scope by analysing two poets and their reflections on national discourse across Nigeria, providing a holistic view of poetry as a tool of political engagement and ideological critique.

In summary, while these studies provide valuable insights into how poetry functions as a site for ideological struggle, they either focus on different geopolitical contexts, employ different analytical methods, or limit their scope to a single poet or theme. The current research fills a critical gap by applying Fairclough's CDA model to explore how two contemporary Nigerian poets, Chinedu Nwangwu and Jamilu Ja'afar use poetic discourse to critique national issues such as economic hardship, failed leadership, and social injustice. In doing so, the study contributes to both literary scholarship and discourse analysis, foregrounding the role of poetry in shaping and reflecting national consciousness in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Fairclough's framework emphasises the integral role of language in social life (Fairclough 21). Fairclough, a distinguished scholar in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), investigates the interplay between language and social reality by analysing social events (texts), social practices (orders of discourse), and social structures. In his research approach, Fairclough focuses on detecting ideological and power dynamics present in texts, highlighting the significant correlation between power and language as outlined in his work (Fairclough 21).

For over a decade, Fairclough's approach has occupied a central position within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough). Initially termed Critical Language Study, Fairclough aimed to raise awareness of exploitative social relations through language analysis (Fairclough). His subsequent works have continued to uphold this objective, further developing and honing his approach, resulting in one of the most all-encompassing frameworks within CDA (Chouliaraki and Fairclough; Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*; Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*; Fairclough, *Media Discourse*).

According to Fairclough, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) adopts a systematic method to examine the hidden links between language use, written materials, events, and broader social and cultural frameworks. It highlights the importance of these veiled connections in maintaining power dynamics and hegemony. Additionally, CDA brings attention to power imbalances, social injustices, undemocratic behaviours, and societal inequalities, aiming to motivate actions for rectification (Fairclough 7 and 24-25).

The relationship between language usage and social context operates bi-directionally, as language is both influenced by and influences the cultural and social practices in which it is embedded (Fairclough). People's use of language is influenced by their discursive practices, just as the structures of literature shape how discursive practices unfold. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) acknowledges and examines the tension between these two aspects of language use: the impact of literary influences and the constructive nature of texts. Language is a crucial component of society on multiple levels, including social identity, social relationships, and systems of knowledge and belief, each with varying degrees of impact (Fairclough 7-8).

Fairclough coined the term “critical language study” to describe his approach to language and discourse, which sought to bring attention to how language contributes to the subjugation of certain individuals by others. He emphasizes the interconnectedness of language and society, with each influencing the other (Fairclough 17-25). Fairclough identifies three primary functions of discourse: identity, relational, and ideational functions.

Fairclough presents a three-dimensional framework for text and discourse analysis based on Halliday’s functional approach to language (Fairclough 73; Halliday 3). This framework consists of three fundamental components: (1) analysing the formal characteristics of a text through linguistic analysis, (2) interpreting how discursive processes and interactions influence the text as both a product and a valuable asset, and (3) examining the connection between discourse and social/cultural contexts (Fairclough 73–75). Through the analysis of language forms, Fairclough reveals social processes and embedded ideologies, uncovering power relations and hidden agendas within society or communities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and exploratory research design, with a specific focus on how language constructs and reflects power within poetic discourse. The research analyses two selected Nigerian poems, Nwangwu’s “*Weep Nigeria*” and Ja’afar’s “*Economic Hardship in Nigeria*” to identify the intricate relationship between language, discourse, and power. A qualitative approach is most suitable for this investigation because it allows for an in-depth examination of the figurative language, ideological structures, and socio-political contexts embedded within the texts. This design also aligns with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly Fairclough’s three-dimensional model,

which emphasises the interplay between textual features, discursive practices, and social structures.

The method of data collection for this research is purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that involves the deliberate selection of data relevant to the study's objectives. Given the focus on how poetic language reflects national discourse and power dynamics, purposive sampling enables the researcher to isolate key stanzas and lines that employ figurative devices, such as personification, symbolism, metaphor, and irony, which serve as discursive tools in the critique of socio-economic and political realities in Nigeria. The poems were selected because of their thematic foci on national hardship and political disillusionment, making them suitable for analysing how poets use language as a vehicle for resistance and commentary.

This research employs Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its primary method of data analysis. The model provides a robust framework for examining how language, ideology, and power are embedded in poetic texts through three interrelated dimensions: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. First, the textual analysis stage involves a close reading of the poems to identify linguistic features such as vocabulary, syntax, and rhetorical devices, metaphor, personification, symbolism, and irony used to reflect and construct power relations. Second, the discursive practice level explores how the poems are produced, interpreted, and distributed within their specific socio-political contexts, focusing on intertextuality and reader reception. Ultimately, the social practice dimension situates the poems within the broader socio-economic and political contexts of Nigeria, revealing how they critique governance, institutional failures, and social injustices. Through this 3-D integrated model,

the study presents a multi-layered interpretation that connects micro-level textual features to macro-level ideological critique, thereby demonstrating how poetic discourse functions as a tool for resistance and national advocacy.

Data Analysis

This section presents data from “Weep Nigeria”, a poem by Chinedu Nnadi Nwangwu, posted on X (formerly, Twitter) by Rufai Oseni on 24th March, 2025, which stirred comments on X (a social media handle); and Mallam Jamilu Ja’afar ‘Economic Hardship’.

Datum 1:

*Weep, Nigeria—
For the soil is heavy with blood,
And the sky hangs low with despair.
A land where godfathers pull strings in dark rooms,
Turning the law into a puppet on fraying threads.
In Rivers, a pipeline is breached,
And in the blink of an eye—State of Emergency!
Yet where is this urgency
For the lives buried in Benue’s fields?
For the soldiers fallen in Borno’s sands?
For Sokoto and Zamfara’s crimson dust,
Where bandits write their will in blood? Not for lives lost,
But for pipelines broken.
Is oil thicker than blood?
Is property dearer than life?
Chinedu Nnadi Nwangwu (2025)*

At the textual level, Nwangwu’s poem uses dense figurative language, particularly personification, metaphor, and symbolism to depict national grief and governmental negligence:

*“For the soil is heavy with blood,
And the sky hangs low with despair.”*

Here, personification attributes human grief to nature, suggesting that even the environment mourns. The “blood” and “despair” set an elegiac tone, foregrounding violence and

hopelessness as national conditions. At the discursive level, the poem draws cultural and historical tragedy and political disillusionment. By evoking the image of blood soaked soil, Nwangwu situates the text within a broader discourse of collective memory about conflict, corruption and loss in Nigeria by reinforcing a sense of solidarity among reader who recognise these experiences. While at socio-cultural practice level, the poet criticises systemic power relations by implicitly questioning the states' responsibility for security and justice. The imagery of mourning nature functions as social commentary, challenging the dominant political narratives that downplay or normalise violence. This is why the text becomes resistant to such social atrocities, and the author invites the readers to engage with socio-economic conditions that perpetuate despair.

*“A land where godfathers pull strings in dark rooms,
Turning the law into a puppet on fraying threads.”*

At textual level, the expression “godfathers” functions as a metaphor reflecting the manipulation of state power by unseen political forces. “Godfathers” connoting authority, control and patronage, while the image of “the law” as a puppet emphasise the subversion of political institutions this suggests that justice and governance are no longer autonomous but controlled by vested interests. At the discursive level, this metaphor expresses the unfamiliar national narrative of political “godfatherism” which continues to shape elections, policy decision making, and access to resources in contemporary Nigeria. The public shared awareness of ongoing cases of electoral interference, corruptions, scandals and executive overreach echoes interpretive power of the text. At socio-cultural practice level, the text criticises the current realities, where insecurity, economic hardship, and weakening democratic institutions portray deepening crises of governance. Therefore, the metaphor is not merely used for descriptive purpose, it is used to diagnose and showing

how powerful patronage networks keep worsening Nigeria's political and social problems, and urging readers to notice and resist these unjust systems.

The lines:

*"Is oil thicker than blood?
Is property dearer than life?"*

The above lines employ rhetorical questions to highlight the absurdity of a value system that places economic resources above human life. The use of contrastive imagery "pipelines broken" vs. "lives lost" illustrates the government's selective urgency and misplaced priorities.

Lexical choices such as "blood," "crimson dust," "fraying threads," and "puppet" denote fragility, violence, and manipulation. These are not just stylistic features, they encode ideological meanings that criticise leadership ineptitude.

At the discursive practice level, how the poem is produced is analysed, distributed, and interpreted. Nwangwu writes within a socio-political context of public disillusionment with governance, especially the Federal Government's inconsistent response to crises.

The audience, largely Nigerians, interprets the text as a direct critique of recent political events. Specifically, the State of Emergency declared in Rivers State, following tensions between Governor Fubara and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, is perceived as politically motivated. The poem alludes to this:

*"In Rivers, a pipeline is breached,
And in the blink of an eye—State of Emergency!"*

This contrasts sharply with the government's silence or inaction regarding mass killings in Benue, Borno, Sokoto, and Zamfara, which the poem notes:

*“Where is this urgency
For the lives buried in Benue’s fields?”*

Thus, the poem’s discursive function is to challenge dominant political narratives and expose unequal governance practices. Readers, all over the world, are informed by local realities, and the poem may be decoded as a symbolic resistance text, a form of protest discourse embedded in literary form.

Additionally, the poem contributes to intertextuality, referencing not only political events but also echoing a broader literary tradition of African poets (e.g., Niyi Osundare, Odia Ofeimun) who use poetry to contest social injustice.

At the social practice level, the poem reflects and critiques Nigeria’s socio-political structure, where neopatrimonialism, resource control politics, and elite dominance define governance.

The reference to “godfathers” invokes patron-client politics, a system where powerful individuals determine state decisions, side-lining democratic accountability. This is emblematic of postcolonial African governance, where formal institutions are often weakened by informal networks of control.

The symbolic value of oil in the poem represents state priorities, while the repeated references to blood, death, and banditry expose a society where human life is devalued. The rhetorical question *“Is oil thicker than blood?”* is not just poetic; it is also an ideological posturing, that unmasks capitalist greed and state failure.

The crisis in Rivers State, underlined in the poem, is positioned as a political drama orchestrated by powerful political figures, who place premium on their personal interest

more than national interests. This aligns with the broader hegemonic discourse, where some regions or figures receive state protection, while others are abandoned.

Fairclough argues that discourse does not just reflect the world, it shapes it. By framing governmental failure as an emotional and moral tragedy, Nwangwu's poem becomes a tool of resistance and consciousness-raising, particularly among the politically marginalised.

Datum 2:

*Unemployment's grip tightens day by day,
Leaving hopes shattered, and dreams in disarray.
Families strive, yet poverty persists,
A cruel cycle that persists and persists.*

*Inflation's wrath, a relentless tide,
Prices soaring, opportunities denied.
The common man bears the burden's weight,
His aspirations were crushed, left to his fate.*

*Corruption's shadow looms over the land,
A cancerous force that few can withstand.
Resources squandered, trust eroded,
Leaving the nation wounded and corroded.*

*Yet amidst the chaos, resilience thrives,
In hearts and minds, hope forever survives.
Communities unite, their spirits unbowed,
With strength and solidarity, they stand proud.*

Mallam Jamilu Ja'afaru (2023)

Ja'afaru's poem is a reflective and emotionally charged commentary on Nigeria's worsening socio-economic conditions. At the textual level, the poet employs figurative language, repetition, and metaphor to portray hardship, corruption, and resilience. The phrase "*Unemployment's grip tightens day by day*" personifies unemployment, depicting it as an active, constricting force that suffocates the populace. The image of shattered hopes

and disarrayed dreams captures the psychological and emotional toll of mass joblessness in a country where youth unemployment exceeds 50%.

The metaphor “*Inflation’s wrath, a relentless tide*” likens inflation to a natural disaster, inescapable and devastating. This imagery reflects the daily economic struggle faced by millions who cannot afford food, transport, or basic necessities due to rising costs. The repetition in “*a cruel cycle that persists and persists*” emphasizes the inescapable and generational nature of poverty, reinforcing the hopelessness of the situation.

The poet constructs a grim semantic field through words like “shattered,” “burden,” “shadow,” “cancerous,” “wounded,” and “corroded.” These lexical choices suggest a nation both physically and morally degraded by corruption and mismanagement. However, the final stanza shifts tone, as seen in “Yet amidst the chaos, resilience thrives,” offering a note of hope. This juxtaposition not only balances the narrative but reframes the people as active agents of endurance and solidarity.

In terms of discursive practice, the poem emerges as a response to contemporary Nigerian realities, namely, the socio-economic consequences of government policies such as fuel subsidy removal, currency devaluation, and political instability. It is likely composed with a Nigerian audience in mind, particularly the working class and unemployed youth who feel the daily weight of these issues. The poet, drawing from a shared cultural and national experience, constructs a text that is both accessible and emotionally resonant.

The poem may circulate through informal channel: Facebook, where poetry continues to serve as a medium of civic engagement. Its interpretation depends heavily on the reader’s lived experiences. For many Nigerians, phrases like “dreams in disarray” and “prices

soaring” are literal descriptions of life under current economic hardship. The poem thus functions as a counter-narrative, providing an alternative to state-sponsored discourses that often downplay or deflect responsibility for economic failure.

The shift from despair to resilience at the poem’s end reinforces a culturally familiar theme in Nigerian discourse: the endurance of the common man. This is not just poetic optimism, but a deeply rooted ideological stance in which suffering is met with moral strength and communal unity.

At the level of social practice, the poem engages with Nigeria’s broader structural and ideological crises. Thematically, it reflects a society struggling under the weight of corruption, unemployment, and inflation. The lines “*Corruption’s shadow looms over the land, / A cancerous force that few can withstand*” articulate a widespread perception of political rot, where political elites enrich themselves while the masses suffer. The metaphor of corruption as “cancerous” captures its insidious, terminal threat to national health and integrity.

In Nigeria today, inflation has reached record highs, eroding purchasing power and driving millions into deeper poverty. Simultaneously, corruption scandals remain frequent, with little accountability. Public trust in government institutions is extremely low, and many citizens feel alienated from decision-making processes. The poet’s reference to “resources squandered” and “trust eroded” captures this national mood of betrayal and despair.

However, the concluding stanza affirms the social ideology of resilience and solidarity. In a context where state institutions are often absent or ineffective, communities are increasingly turning inward for survival, through mutual aid, collective action, and informal

economies. The poet affirms that in spite of structural violence, hope remains embedded in social relationships and communal strength. This ideological stance reflects what Fairclough calls “counter-hegemonic discourse,” where ordinary people reclaim agency and resist dominant narratives of passivity and dependency.

Discussion of Findings

Using Fairclough’s three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, provided insights to the analysis of *Weep Nigeria* by Nwangwu and *Economic Hardship in Nigeria* by Ja’afaru,

Initially, both poems employed figurative language such as personification, metaphor, symbolism, and rhetorical questions to connect language, power, and social context. In addition, it was found that CDA is highly effective in uncovering the ideological leanings embedded in the poems and this covers the lexical choices at the textual level of Fairclough’s 3D CDA. Additionally, the ideologies of the poets were uncovered at the discursive and socio-cultural levels, and this is obvious when they criticized negligence of the government, they critiqued them of corruption, and the selective enforcement of state policies. Finally, it was found that the poets expressed public dissatisfaction and frame state policies within a wider social and moral context. Both poets transform private anguish into collective awareness, emphasizing resilience, solidarity, and communal strength. Their work reframes citizens as active agents of endurance and potential change, giving voice to marginalized groups and highlighting societal grievances.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Nigerian poetry operates as a socio-political tool: figurative language bridges lived realities and critique, CDA uncovers embedded

ideologies, and the poets' narratives articulate public discontent while promoting consciousness, resistance, and solidarity.

Conclusion

This study holds significance not only for the advancement of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) but also as an illuminating commentary on the deplorable socio-political condition of Nigeria. It highlights the disturbing realities, including the often-performative theatrics within the National Assembly, where laws shaping the nation are made. The researcher's careful selection of *Weep Nigeria* and *Economic Hardship in Nigeria* provides a robust analogy of the sentiments of the average Nigerian toward leadership. The empirical review further strengthens the CDA framework by showing how prior works mirror real-life discursive situations. The findings demonstrate that language is not merely a medium of expression but a crucial instrument for transforming psychological states into relatable social commentary. The figurative devices employed, particularly personification, symbolism, and irony, are not ornamental; they serve clear didactic and ideological functions.

Through the lens of Fairclough's CDA, both poems emerge as more than literary compositions; they are sites of ideological contestation, national reflection, and socio-political critique. They reveal the ability of Nigerian poets to speak truth to power, challenge systemic injustice, and represent the lived realities of their people, thereby inspiring the narrative for national renewal. In this way, poetry transcends artistic creativity to become a potent tool for social consciousness and nation-building.

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