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‘They Hid Our Palliatives and Now They Want to give us Vaccine’: Recontextualizations of COVID-19 Facebook Vaccination Discourses of Nigeria Centre for Disease Control

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Abstract:

This study deployed Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) to investigate four (4) Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (hereafter, NCDC) COVID-19 vaccination updates and two hundred (200) ensuing reactions among Nigerian Facebook users. The study intends to ascertain how such reactions reflected the socio-political context and the intertexts in which the COVID-19 vaccination was embedded and how it affected the vaccine's receptiveness in Nigeria. NCDC was established in the year 2011 as a government health agency that deals with the outbreak of infectious diseases. The findings of the study revealed that NCDC ideologically framed itself as health experts, solution providers and health interventionists via the use of nomination strategies, such as proper nouns, dietic and professional anthroponyms, which are meant to trigger optimism among Nigerians. However, reactions to the COVID-19 updates have been re-contextualized to capture the socio-political intertexts at the time, which have affected the inoculation exercise. Respondents negatively framed the Nigerian government as the main social actors, engaging dialectic and phoric expressions as out-group markers, tropes such as metaphors and similes, among others, as topos for rejecting the vaccine. The study argues that COVID-19 vaccination reluctance and abstinence by Nigerians were largely informed by presupposed socio-historic and socio-cognitive factors, such as topos of corruption and distrust of government (35%), bad governance and demand for responsible government (15.5%) among other factors which are forms of protest for the civic rights of the people.

Keywords: *Discourse historical approach, Facebook, COVID-19 vaccination, Nigeria Center for Disease Control, power relations/ideologies*

1. Introduction

The flare of the pandemic signals periods of distress, fear, pain and uncertainty. Therefore, it is imperative that language use should be controlled, given that faulty communication goes beyond exacerbating the already tense situation to influencing public opinions and responses that affect the curbing of such outbreaks. With the advent of social media outlets and the multiplicity of online forums today, there is quick access to information, communication and interaction. Internet platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and a host of others have become pivotal in disseminating news, entertainment and health-related discourses, like vaccination campaigns and other matters of public interest. It has also served as an avenue for interaction among various teeming news community participants. Innocent Chiluwa and Akin Odebumi(2016) believe that online fora are reflections of 'citizen's civic engagement and political participation' (p. 91). For instance, the impact of Facebook, which was created by Mark Zuckerberg (2004), reveals the wide coverage of social interactions, campaigns, propaganda, social affiliations and, most importantly, the effects they have on the socio-cognition of participants. Scholars have examined language use on social media at large and Facebook in particular (Aboh & Ezeudu, 2020; Bossan & Oyedeji, 2020; Damkor, 2022), among others. Ijioma and Nze (2022, p.1) reveal that social media spiraled false information about COVID-19 in Nigeria, resulting in vaccination hesitancy. The present study focuses on intertextual discourses on NCDC's COVID-19 Facebook vaccination posts, which are forms of ideologies that hampered the COVID-19 inoculation exercise in Nigeria.

With the advent of the pandemic, Coronavirus in 2019, various countries of the world designated government health agencies to tackle the outbreak, of which Nigeria was one. The Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (henceforth, NCDC) is a government-owned institution established in 2011 by the Ministry Of Health. The agency is laden with the responsibility 'to protect the health of Nigerians through evidence-based prevention, integrated disease surveillance and

response activities, using a one-health approach, guided by research and led by a skilled workforce' (ncdc.gov.ng, p. 1). The activities of the agency came into the limelight with the advent of Coronavirus, otherwise called COVID-19, a virus that is also known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona-virus 2 (SARS – COV-2) (Ardensen et al., 2020; Wu F et al. 2020). Dong et al.(2020) revealed that in December 2019, a communal outbreak of pneumonia whose cause was initially unknown was discovered in Hubei, China and further spread to Main Land China and 27 other countries of the world, with over 70,000 confirmed cases as of February 17, 2020. With the outbreak of COVID-19 in Nigeria in February 2020, the responsibility of NCDC increased. The agency provided daily updates on social media handles on the number of new cases in Nigeria, the number of discharged cases, updates on new laboratory establishments and various advisory roles to the public on how to combat the deadly pandemic. Consequently, Nigerians viewed NCDC's social media handles as one of the swiftest channels through which they communicated their opinions and vented their long nursed grievances, not only about the COVID-19 updates but about the extant state of the economy, social welfare of the citizens, insecurity and socio-political matters arising.

Obviously, discourses related to NCDC's Facebook vaccination updates on COVID-19 were 'decontextualized,' striped of the immediate focus on COVID-19 vaccination and 're-contextualized,' exported into a new frame of interdiscursivity of socio-political and socio-cognitive discourses perceived rather be the societal concern. According to Wodak (2015), 'if an element is taken out of a specific context, we observe a process of decontextualization: if the respective element is then inserted into a new context, we witness a process of recontextualization.' In recontextualization, the phenomenon partly acquires a new meaning and new framing (p.7). Akilotan (2022), in a study on 'A Multidimensional Interface and Nigerian Political Discourse: A Case Study of Ideological Issues Underlying Coronavirus Discourse in Nigeria,' proposes that discourses in Nigeria can gain meaningful insight via certain multi-faceted ideologies which are universal to discourses in Nigeria and subsumes the participants, the social structure and the entirety of its structure. Hence, the study examines in the light of Resigl and Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (hereafter, DHA) (2015; 2017), four purposively selected Facebook posts by NCDC on COVID-19 vaccination in addition to 200 randomly selected commentaries in response to these posts in the month of March 2021, when COVID-19 vaccination consentment arrived Nigeria. This is to unearth distinct linguistic forms and text organizations that may reveal socio-historic, socio-political and cognitive factors that affected the attitude of the people towards COVID-19 inoculation exercise and, therefore, are forms of ideologies that hampered the exercise.

2. Reviews of Literature

Surveys of scholarly works done on COVID-19 range from:

- Studies on COVID-19 symptomology (e.g., Yang, L. et al., 2020; Sheikhi, K., Shirzadfar, H., & Sheikhi, M., 2020; Kamal, M. et al., 2021);
- Studies on COVID-19 treatment (e.g., Tarighi, P. et al., 2021; Rahman, M.T., & Idid, S. Z., 2021) and
- Studies on NCDC's COVID-19 vaccination campaigns (e.g., Ugwuoke et al., 2021; Aragbuwa & Adejumo, 2021; Ogunrinde & Ajenifari, 2021; Young et al., 2021; Shmueli, 2021; Ope-Davies & Shodipe, 2023).

Studies on NCDC COVID-19 vaccination campaign have utilized Multimodal Discourse Theory and the theories of Discourse Analysis to evaluate community readiness in response to COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. Specific linguistic studies, for instance, Ugwuoke et al. focused on the linguistic import of NCDC's COVID-19 vaccine adverts and its visual effects on the victims of Insecurity in Nigeria and revealed that victims of conflict who viewed visual messages on COVID-19 vaccination responded to higher task efficacy, more positive outcome expectancy and were more eager to take the vaccine more than those who did not view the adverts, Aragbuwa and Adejumo (2021) discuss various representations, interactions, compositions and communicative implications of such visual advert. They believe that NCDC's COVID-19 campaign adverts enact directive, reinforcing, preventive, cautionary and collective linguistic functions. Ogunrinde and Ajenifari (2021), appraising NCDC's widely circulated SMS on COVID-19, note that using repetitions in NCDC's messages was to persuade the general public to self-action in curbing the pandemic. In this vein, visual and textual resources were successfully utilized as Multimodal Discourse forms to communicate, inform and educate the masses during the pandemic, revealing the growing importance of web-based platforms for interaction and sharing of meaning in event-based social occurrences (Ope-Davies & Shodipe, 2023).

Further, linguistic studies which examined various social media participants' reactions to COVID-19 studies utilized Multimodal Discourse Theory, Semiotics, Stance and the Appraisal Framework to analyse textual and visual signs, such as the use of social media memes during the COVID-19 pandemic (Unuabonah & Oyeboode, 2021; Ajayi & Akinrinlola, 2021; Maledo & Ativie, 2022; Adebomi, 2022). Unuabonah and Oyeboode (2021) reveal that the use of memes was deployed by Nigerians as a form of protest against political corruption, perceived government deceit, insecurity and hunger during the pandemic. Memes and texts during the pandemic also unveiled the prevailing socio-political and religious contexts in Nigeria, performing the practice of warning, admonition, informing, and mockery, among other functions (Ajayi & Akinrinlola, 2021). Adebomi (2022) argues that the memes used on the Nigerian social media space during the pandemic represent economic and social concerns relating to poverty, insecurity and inequality, which posed a threat to COVID-19 safety measures. In a similar study, Maledo and Ativie (2022) note that language and visuals during the pandemic complement each other and serve as veritable tools for communicating the realities on the ground. Examining Nigerians' reactions towards the COVID-19 pandemic health precaution campaigns, Onipede (2021), using pragma-semiotic approaches of Mey (2001) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) categorized the posts into four segments: business innovation and profit-oriented, law-abiding, poverty striking and satirical themes. They state that such posts illustrate ethical responsibility that has huge implications for public peace in Nigeria.

Adopting the Stance Theory, the Appraisal Theory and Corpus Linguistics, Ononye, Chigbu and Nwakwo (2021) explore social media reactions to NCDC's Facebook posts. The findings of the study demonstrate how corpus analytic studies may be beneficial in improving qualitative studies via appraisal, exploring patterns of evaluative languages that can be utilized in drawing inferences from a corpus of a larger group. The study further reveals that FB writers' reactions towards COVID-19 posts by NCDC were largely negative and are indicative of the conflict of interest that exists between them, as the appraisers and the government. Hence, the government was stereotyped as 'fake' and 'fraudulent' while adjudging the Coronavirus as a 'hoax.'

Other linguistic studies have analysed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nigerian languages (Obiorah, 2021; Kupolati, Adebileje & Adeleke, 2021; Inyima & Donna-Ezinne, 2022; Onwukwe & Emezue, 2023). The studies examined the roles of indigenous languages and Nigerian English in COVID-19 information dissemination among rural dwellers in Nigeria. Obiorah (2021), using Salawu's Model for Indigenous Language Developmental Communication, disclosed that Nigerian indigenous languages were utilized in circulating information on COVID-19 preventive measures, health orientation and medical deliveries. On the other hand, Nwosu and Donna-Ezinne, using Functional Linguistic Approach, observed that Nigerian English was developed via morphemic coinages, phrasal restructuring and syntactic compositions, among others, during the pandemic. Lending credence to these scholarly views, Kupolati, Adebileje and Adeleke (2021) argue that the pandemic aided the introduction of new words into the Nigerian English (NE) in business, education, social media and health sectors, providing a COVID-19 vocabulary corpus for the Nigerian English Vocabulary.

The present study defers from extant literature on COVID-19 as it focuses on Wodak and Resigl's Discourse Historical Approach to NCDC's COVID-19 vaccination posts and the ensuing textual reactions from Facebook respondents to ascertain the interdiscursivity and likely ideological perspectives of the texts, which have affected the vaccination programme in Nigeria. The closest studies to the present study (Ugwuoke et al., 2021; Aragbuwa & Adejumo, 2021; Unuabonah & Oyebode, 2021; Ajayi & Akinrinlola, 2021; Maledo & Ativie, 2022; Adebomi, 2022) all differ from this study as they focused on examining the use of memes as multimodal reactions to COVID-19 precautionary campaigns. Although Ononye, Chigbu and Nwakwo (2021) explored social media reactions to NCDC's Facebook COVID-19 posts, the study utilized the Stance, Appraisal theory and Corpus Linguistics and did not focus on NCDC's COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. Hence, the theoretical approach, as well as the concepts which yield the findings, differ.

3. Theoretical Framework

Modern Critical Discourse Analysis was birthed out of a small convention of notable linguistic scholars in the year 1991 in Amsterdam. Prior to this time, CDA had existed but had not been given much attention before that time. Five scholars met to deliberate the future of modern critical discourse. These include Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Teun Van Dijk, Ruth Wodak and Theo Van Leeuwen (Wodak, 2001, p. 4). Scholars have addressed CDA from divergent scholarly views, although with certain consensus on the general purposes of doing CDA (Fairclough, 1989, 1995, 2001; Meyer, 2001; Van Dijk, 1995, 2015; among others). Wodak summarily defines CDA as 'analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)' (2001, p. 2). While Wodak's approach to CDA is socio-historic based, Teun Van Dijk focuses on socio-cognition in doing CDA and Fairclough on the socio-contextual aspect of CDA. For the purpose of the present study, Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach will be used as the theoretical framework and is further discussed below.

Wodak's Discourse – Historical approach (henceforth, DHA), which was explored by Wodak (1999, 2001, 2009, 2011, 2015), focuses on doing critical discourse based on linguistic, historical and sociological analysis of texts (Wodak, 2015, p. 1). This implies that the historical background of a text is accounted for in the text interpretation and may reveal how texts are decontextualized (taken out of a specific context) and re-contextualized (partly given a new meaning or given a new frame' (2015, p. 7), as well as the interdiscursivity of texts. Other important aspects that DHA considers in common with other variants of CDA include 'critique,' 'ideology' and 'power (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017, p. 87). Text critique is further divided into:

- Text or discourse – an immanent critique that studies the inconsistencies, self-contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in the internal structures of text,
- Socio-diagnostic critique in which persuasive or manipulative elements of discursive practice are taken cognizance of,
- Future-related prospective critique is also done to enhance communication (2017, p. 88).
- In addition, DHA considers how semiotic practices manifest and perpetuate ideology and power dominance through discourse since power indicates unequal relationships between social actors or diverse social groups (Wodak, 2015; Reisigl & Wodak, 2017).

3.1. Tools of Analysis and Principles of DHA

Wodak (2015, p.12), Reisigl & Wodak (2017, p. 9) reveal the three dimensions of doing DHA:

Having identified the specific contents, topics of a specific discourse, discursive strategies are investigated, linguistic means are examined as types, and specific, context-dependent linguistic realizations are examined as tokens. Here, the coherence of the text is examined by looking at the macro-topics and subtopics of a given text.

Further, the aim of the text produced is taken cognizance to ascertain if the producer is set to convince or persuade his audience, tell a story or report an incident (2015, p.12). In doing the aforementioned, certain linguistic strategies are analysed to demonstrate the discursive representations and construction of 'us' and 'them' (2015, p.12).

3.2. Resigl's and Wodak's Discursive Strategies

- **Nomination:** The nomination strategy includes the discursive construction of social actors, objects, phenomena, events and processes. The realization devices include: the use of membership categorization devices, such as deictics, anthroponyms, etc. Tropes, such as metaphors, metonymies, synecdoches: verbs and nouns that indicate processes and actions, etc.
- **Prediction:** The prediction strategy subsumes discursive qualifications of social actors, objects, phenomena and events more or less positively or negatively. Its realization device includes: adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases, clauses that denote stereotypes and evaluative characteristics of positive or negative traits. Others are explicit predicates, comparisons that include the use of figures of speech, collocations, and allusions such as evocations, presuppositions and implicatures.
- **Argumentation:** This refers to justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness. The realization devices include: the use of topoi, which maybe formal or content-related and fallacies.
- **Perspectivization:** This is the positioning of the speaker's or writer's point of view, which expresses involvement or distance. The devices of realization include: deictics, direct and indirect speech, quotation marks and particles. Others are metaphor and animating prosody.
- **Intensification or Mitigation:** The strategy involves modifying or mitigating an illocutionary force of speech which bears on the epistemic and deontic status of the speech. Its modes of realization include: diminutives or augmentatives, particles, question tags, subjunctive, hesitations and vague expressions. Others are indirect speech acts and verbs of saying, feeling, thinking, etc. (Resigl & Wodak, 2017, p. 95).

Finally, the historical context is taken into account in interpreting text and discourse. The historical interpretation gives room for how recontextualization functions in connecting the texts and intertextuality as well as the interdiscursivity of the text.

4. Methodology

This study utilizes the qualitative research method and the descriptive research design. The data comprised four NCDC's COVID-19 vaccination posts in the month of March and 200 reactions to the posts, retrieved from NCDC's official Facebook verified page. The analysis is divided into two: the first appraisal, analysed in tabular form, focuses on four (4) NCDC's Facebook posts in the month of March 2021, when the COVID-19 vaccine was newly brought into Nigeria. The choice of the period is peculiar as there was heightened pressure to find the right vaccine to curb the pandemic at the time, as well as palpable tension to find a lasting solution to the Coronavirus. Besides, the NCDC's posts at the time received the highest number of reactions to the COVID-19 vaccination exercise. They include NCDC's Post on March 2, 2021, when the vaccine first arrived in Nigeria, which got a total of 4,500 commentaries; March 4, 2021 - 312 commentaries; March 12, 2021 - 160 commentaries and March 23, 2021 - 864 commentaries. The second aspect of the analysis subsumes two hundred (200) reactions in response to the four selected texts, in which we randomly chose the first fifty (50) reactions related to each NCDC's vaccination post and further merged all, subjecting them to initial manual separation into discourse topics and finally, categorizing them into six discourse topics for ease of analysis. It should also be noted that the analysis was done thematically and not serially, appraising samples of each discourse topic to avoid clumsiness and repetitions. Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach was applied as a theoretical framework to understudy the argumentation strategies and as the ideological perspectivization of the COVID-19 discourse participants. Further in the analysis, several opinions were given in objection, acceptance or neutrality in regard to the COVID-19 vaccination, which arrived in Nigeria on March 2, 2021. The table below shows the frequencies of these opinions. The abbreviation 'OBO' stands for 'Objection Based on...', while 'RESP' stands for 'Respondent.'

4.1. NCDC COVID-19 Vaccination Posts and Analysis

Data Presentation & Analysis of NCDC's COVID-19 Vaccination Posts	Nomination Strategies: Discursive Construction of Social Actors	Prediction Strategies: Attributes and characteristics of social actors, positively/negatively.	Argumentation Strategies: Persuading addresses of truth/normative rightness of claim.	Perspectivization Strategies: Positioning of speakers or writer's point of view, e.g., involvement or distance.	Mitigation/ Intensification Strategies: Modifying the illocutionary force of utterance.
Text 1: Vaccination Campaign, March 2, 2021- Post B. 368 days after Nigeria detected her first case, we are pleased to receive our 1 st shipment of 4 million doses of	Proper Names: Nigeria dietics/phoric expressions: 'her,' 'we,' 'our' referring to NCDC and Nigeria as in-group members. Professional anthroponyms #COVAX facility Ideological anthroponyms Health information	Positive representation of Nigeria and the COVAX facility as proactive, responsible and determined to curb COVID-19. COVID-19 healthcare initiative-timely, interventional	Claims of truth in relation to the detection of COVID-19, arrival of COVID-19 vaccination in Nigeria and claims of rightness to accept the vaccine. Topo of responsibility conviction and	Ideological perspective: Health proactive stance, fully involved by the use of direct speech & first person dietics/phoric expressions: 'we,' 'our.'	Topos of interventionist s intensified by the illocutionary force of the addressee: #say yes to COVID-19, #Take Responsibility, which is

<p>#COVID-19 vaccine. We are grateful to the #COVAX facility for this timely intervention. #Yes to COVID-19 vaccine #Take Responsibility</p>	<p>custodians, healthcare providers. Discursive construction of objects/phenomena/events related to COVID-19 Concrete: 1st shipment of 4 million doses of #COVID-19 Vaccine. Mental object/feelings: optimism, elation, hope. Ideological matters: Solution providers Discursive construction of processes and actions. Accelerated efforts at curbing COVID-19</p>		<p>persuasion.</p>		<p>telling a hearer to do an act (bald-on-record politeness (Brown & Levison, 1987).</p>
<p>Text 2: Vaccination Post, March 4, 2021- Post B. 'Today, we joined the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr. Osage Ehamre, at a national council of health meeting with all state commissioners of health & heads of national health agencies. We are working closely with our sister agencies, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency and National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, as the #COVID-19 Vaccine is gradually introduced across states.'</p>	<p>Proper names: Dr. Osage Ehamre (Honorable Minister of Health, National Primary Health Care Development Agency and National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control Dietics/Phoric expressions 'We,' 'our' referring to NCDC and sister agencies, used as in-group references to NCDC, related health agencies and the Nigerian government. Professional anthroponyms. National Council of Health meeting, with state commissioners of health & heads of national health agencies. Ideological anthroponyms: Health experts and health policymakers Discursive construction of processes and action. Material: COVID-19 vaccination initiated, in progress and COVID-19 under Control</p>	<p>Positive attributions of social actors: Capable professional healthcare experts equipped to control the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare processes – steady and progressive.</p>	<p>Topos and claims of United Health Expert Front against COVID-19, collaborative work towards COVID-19 Vaccination and claims of progressive administration of the vaccine</p>	<p>Ideological perspectivization: promotion of COVID-19 Vaccination; proactive healthcare professional stance in COVID-19 eradication /vaccine administration.</p>	<p>Topos of backgrounding health experts' efforts towards COVID-19 vaccination through the intensification of actions, Topos or fallacy of moral obligation toward the vaccination exercise.</p>

<p>Text 3: Vaccination Post, March 12, 2021(Post B). 'The #COVID-19 vaccine is safe & effective. National Primary Healthcare Development Agency has started the rollout of the vaccination. We are closer to controlling this pandemic. Nevertheless, #Take Responsibility, continue to adhere to all #COVID-19 preventive measures.'</p>	<p>Proper names: #COVID-19 dietics/phoric expressions – 'we' referring to NCDC as in-group. Professional Anthroponym, National Primary Healthcare Development Agency. Ideological Anthroponymy: Health experts effectively handling the vaccination. Construction of object phenomena/events related to the vaccination. Concrete: #COVID-19 vaccine rollout. Mental object/feeling solution to COVID-19 Ideological matters: The vaccine is safe and effective. Construction of processes/Actors: Health: Vaccination initiated/progressive. Mental: Motivation verbal COVID-19 vaccination report.</p>	<p>Positive portrayal of NCDC and sister agency as actively in control of the pandemic and actively giving out COVID-19 vaccination processes; ongoing, progressive and the vaccine beneficial.</p>	<p>The post contains claims that the COVID-19 vaccine is effective, the vaccine is being administered and that NCDC is in charge and on top of the pandemic - Topos of actively controlling the pandemic and Topos of convincing the hearer to take responsibility.</p>	<p>Ideological perspectivization: COVID-19 Vaccination promoter and supporter NCDC shows that she is in charge of the vaccine, a promoter and supporter of the vaccines through the attribution that the vaccine is safe and that the use of 'we are close to controlling the pandemic.</p>	<p>The illocutionary force is direct, intensified and unmitigated. The addresses are warned to #Take Responsibility and continue to adhere to all #COVID-19 preventive measures, which is bald on-record politeness mode (See Brown & Levinson, 1987).</p>
<p>Text 4: Vaccination Post, March 23, 2021. 'We're delighted with the progress of our sister agency, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency and State Governments in getting our #COVID-19 vaccination programmes started. We're closer to controlling the acute phase of the pandemic and urge Nigerians to continue to #TakeResponsibility.'</p>	<p>Dietics/phoric expressions: 'We' refers to NCDC as a group. Professional Anthroponyms: National Primary Health Care Development Agency State governments named as aiding the vaccination process. Ideological Anthroponyms Health experts and professional vaccine handlers. Construction of objects, phenomena/events/related to COVID-19 Vaccination. Concrete: #COVID-19 vaccination programmes successful. Mental object/feeling: Hope, solution & relief from COVID-19 Construction of COVID-19 Vaccination process: initiated, in progress and optimistic</p>	<p>NCDC, National Primary Health Care Development Agency and state government are represented as interventionists, Realists, hard workers</p>	<p>Class of hard work: Claims of control over the COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccination exercise. Also – there are Topos of praise & Topos of Control</p>	<p>Ideological perspective: NCDC portrays itself as a proactive interventionist.</p>	<p>Mitigation: Topos of backgrounding the effort of NCDC & Sister agencies. Intensification : Topos of Moral duty for Nigerians # Take Responsibility.</p>

Table 1

4.2. Text Presentation and Analysis of the Reactions to COVID-19 Vaccination Posts

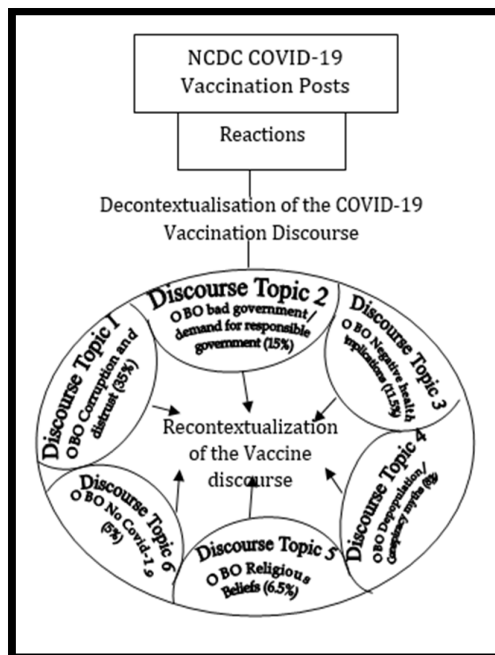


Figure 1: Diagram Showing the Decontextualization and the Recontextualization of the Vaccination Campaign

The following research questions will guide the analysis below:

- How are NCDC, the government and the vaccination process named by respondents as nomination strategies in the texts?
- What attributes and characteristics are given to the social actors above and the vaccination exercise as predictive strategies?
- What claims topoi are deployed as an argumentation strategy by the respondents to communicate their ideology towards the COVID-19 vaccination?
- How are the points of view of the respondents positively or negatively reflected towards the vaccination programme as a perspectivization strategy?
- Are the reactions towards the COVID-19 vaccination posts articulated overtly, mitigated or intensified?

Commentaries (200)	Number of Occurrences	Percentage (100%)
OBO on Corruption and Distrust of the Government	70	35%
OBO Bad Government and Demand for Responsible Government	31	15.5%
OBO Negative Health Implication	23	11.5%
Neutral Response Demanding Better Government	18	9%
Strong Support for COVID-19 Vaccination	16	8%
OBO Depopulation and Conspiracy Myth	16	8%
OBO Religious Beliefs	13	6.5%
No COVID-19	10	5%
OBO Ethnic Marginalization	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

Table 2: Facebook Intertextual Discourses on NCDC Posts on COVID-19 Vaccination

4.2.1. OBO Corruption and Distrust

OBO corruption and distrust of the Nigerian government ranks first in the reactions to the NCDC posts, about (35%) of the total feedback gathered. In the texts below, the nomination strategies have been highlighted; proper nouns, such as 'Nigeria government' and 'Nigeria,' - RESP.1, 2, 7, 'NCDC'- RESP. 12, Villa and National Assembly' - RESP. 31 and 'Baba Buhari' (the president of Nigeria) are used to refer to the Nigerian government as social actors named in the discourse. Further, the use of dialectics and phoric expressions: 'them,' 'this,' 'our,' 'who,' 'they,' 'themselves,' and 'you' referring to the Nigerian government and its leadership are used as 'out-group' identity markers to create social distance between the respondents and the Nigerian government. It is also pertinent to note that similar identity markers, such as: 'me,' 'my,' 'we,' and 'us' and ideological anthroponyms, such as 'poor masses'-RESP. 31; 'poor people'- RESP.42, are also engaged as referents to the speakers as 'in-group' identity markers to show affinity with one another and as discourse

markers to portray unequal power relations between the government and the people. Respondents have employed tropes such as metaphors, which are also ideological anthroponyms, to name the Nigerian government and politicians. They include: 'our wicked leaders'- RESP. 2, 'looters of Nigeria funds...who enjoy the pains of ordinary Nigerians'- RESP.7, 'evil government,' 'demons'-RESP.8 and 'hoodlums in government'-RESP.42. These ideological anthroponyms highlighted above also reveal the predication strategies, which are the inferable attributes of social actors, such as heartlessness, untrustworthiness and embezzlers of public funds.

- RESP 1: *Congratulations 2 them. But (sic) as for me and my family, we have not taken any dosage from this Nigeria government End (sic) of quote.*
- RESP 2: *Since the hardship created in Nigeria by our wicked leaders has (sic) not killed us till now, it is not Corona that will kill us. You guys can as well embezzle the vaccine as you embezzle the country's wealth.*
- RESP 7: *Vaccines are for looters of Nigeria funds who think only themselves and their families are humans who enjoy the pains ordinary Nigerians are going through.*
- RESP 8: *Who is fooling who here d evil government dat haul palliative of his citizens is shipping in vaccine to save who's life, u all will finish dat vaccine alone Demons everywhere*
- RESP. 12. *Let those in the villa, govt houses, green chambers and members of NCDC and their family members take the shipment; the rest of us will wait for the 2nd shipment. U are welcome.*
- RESP. 29. *Now that the whole system is corrupt, how do we believe in taking this vaccine now, come to think of it? Oh, job them no fit give us, good road wahahala, good educational system, for where...'*
- RESP. 31. *Pls take it to Villa and National Assembly. Let them share between themselves the way they shared our resources. We poor masses don't want it.*
- RESP. 32. *All key officials, starting from Baba Buhari and prominent politicians, should be vaccinated first; if they are safe, we take it, but if they are unsafe, then Nigeria is Safe.*
- RESP. 33. *Some of them will even hide it in their GP tank. Abeg o vaccine or no Vaccine we go survive because as far as i survive Buhari for 5 years, then nothing go happen.*
- RESP. 42. *Hoodlums in government are the ones that will loot this vaccine. Poor people should forget it. No vaccine for you; it's for the elites.*

Moreover, certain argumentation strategies, which include various claims, topos or fallacy, have been employed by respondents to object to the COVID-19 vaccination, which are largely informed by the negative perspectivization of the Nigerian government. Such include claims of economic hardship being worse than the Coronavirus topos of hardship versus vaccine rejection (RESP 2 and 33). Claim that the COVID-19 vaccine is a sort of 'penance' for Nigerian corrupt political leaders; topos of vaccine as punishment for corrupt leaders versus rejection of the vaccine, see RESP. 7, 8, 12, 29, 31, 32 and 42. The illocutionary force of the speech acts by the respondents in the texts above are intensified, using topos of backgrounding of economic hardship, corruption and morality. Mainly, bald on-record (im) politeness strategies characterize the texts above, which buttress the speech acts' intensity (see Brown and Levison, 1987; Culper, 2005, 2016).

- RESP.11: *Greed game activated, if they cld(sic) hide garri, from poor masses, this one they will hide for their 10th generations yet unborn,(sic)but God, will continue to destroy them that put their trust in the vaccine, in God we trust.*
- RESP. 13: *These vaccines should be distributed using COVID-19 palliative distribution formula. In case you guys have forgotten the formula, contact the disaster minister for assistance. Those who got palliative should be ready for the vaccine.*
- RESP. 20 NCDC: *I'm still waiting to see the person that will come and inject this nonsense to(sic) me. When you people were distributing the so-called palliatives, nobody knew of my existence; it's now that you know of every Nigerian, right?*
- RESP.25: *You should vaccinate yourselves and your offspring. We don't need your shi****! (sic)I can't forget how you hoarded the palliatives that were donated by philanthropists and distributed them among you. Just Go Away!*
- RESP. 38: *The vaccines are for you and your families and not for us. You kept the palliatives to yourselves and left the masses in hunger. Now you can keep the vaccines equally to yourselves and your families...'*
- RESP. 49: *Let them go t and hide it as they stole our palliatives made for the poor masses*
- RESP.107: *They hid our palliatives (sic) and now they want to give us vaccines. Please, is it possible to take drugs without food?*
- RESP.108: *A useless country like Nigeria. During the Lockdown, you people locked the food; now it is drugs you people wanted to give free. If I may ask, who is fooling who? Thunder from the pit of hell will fire this government one after the other...*

The texts above reveal major argumentative strategies: claims of respondents as regards being denied palliatives during the COVID-19 lockdown by the Nigerian government and the claim that a government that denied her citizens donated relief materials to assuage hunger at the peak of the pandemic has no moral duty to provide vaccine. The argument is fueled by the alleged discoveries of large quantities of COVID-19 palliatives in government-owned warehouses during the Nigerian EndSars protest, a revolutionary nationwide protest against the alleged brutality of the Nigerian police force, which occurred during the pandemic and was initiated online via various social media handles by thousands of Nigerian youths and spread across most states in Nigeria (See Vanguard, October 26 2020; The Guardian, October 31, 2020; France 24, The Observer, October 27, 2020). Instances of these claims run through all the texts, deploying proper nouns such as NCDC- RESP 20: dialectics, phoric expressions and anthroponyms indicating the social actors; 'they,' 'their 10th generation yet unborn' and 'them' by RESP. 11, 13 and 108: 'You guys,' 'you people,' 'yourselves,' 'them,' and 'those who got palliatives' are used by RESP. 25, 29, 38 and 108 as out-group discourse markers to distance the respondents

from the Nigerian government purported to hoard palliatives and offering vaccines. While 'me,' 'we' and 'us,' 'the masses', metaphor- 'the poor masses' are used by RESP. 20, 25 and 38 as in-group markers to show those who claim to have been denied the palliatives. Based on the illocutionary intensification of the claims discussed, the COVID-19 vaccine is named metaphorically as; 'this nonsense,' 'your shit' and the vaccination process as 'greed game activated' 'fooling,' by RESP. 20, 25, 11 and 108 respectively. Hence, in the perspectivization strategies, the Nigerian government is framed as greedy, selfish and wicked. Consequently, offering the COVID-19 vaccine is viewed as baseless.

4.2.2. OBO Bad Government/Demand for Responsible Government

Argumentative strategies revolve around recent trends in terrorism in Nigeria, arising from the myriads of killings by some disgruntled sects, such as the Bokoharam (an Islamic-driven Jihadist group), Fulani herdsmen & farmers crisis (Bello & Abdulahi, 2021; Erondu & Nwakanma, 2018) and the cascading trends in mass kidnap for ransom, banditry, gunmen attacks and its most recent lexeme, unknown gunmen (Premium Times, April 13, 2022; The Cable, January 18, 2023), are conceived as bigger treats to life than COVID-19 pandemic. The following commentaries lend more credence to the topos.

- RESP. 46: '*...There are many diseases that kills (sic) more than covid-19, those diseases are: 1. herdsmen 2. boko Haram...*'
- RESP. 80: *Let them go and vaccinate all the cows since this government values more than humans.*
- RESP. 88: *Bad government, bad governor, bad senator, bad democracy, even local government bad thin(sic)*
- RESP. 111: *That's why sometimes, we followers in Nigeria, if our government brings some programme, Even if it's good to us, we will not understand(sic)because some of them are not true leaders; god, help us, Nigerian people.*
- RESP. 127: *If it's safe, vaccinate your wives and kids with it. Don't care about us. I wonder how a Govt. that is killing its citizens through hunger and insecurity would care enough to protect the same citizens they are killing from the purported Coronavirus.*
- RESP. 160: *If only the government can use the same agility they are using to campaign and distribute this COVID-19 vaccine to fight corruption, banditry and poverty in Nigeria, I am sure in no time, Nigeria will be the Canada we hope for.*
- RESP. 190: *The COVID-19 vaccine is not the (sic) Nigeria's problem; our problem is to finish Boko Haram, kidnappers, hensmen(sic), youth employment, construction of roads and minimum wage.*
- RESP. 59: *All we want (sic) from you (government) is the provision of social amenities, such as good roads, potable water, constant power supply, food and security. Not vaccines that can damage us.*
- RESP.74: *We need good jobs to feed our families, not vaccines.*

In the above texts, respondents claim that there are bigger threats to human lives in Nigeria than the Coronavirus and the need for vaccination. Hence, topos of insecurity of lives and lack of genuine care from the Nigerian government as the social actors named versus rejection of the COVID-19 vaccination predominate discourse topic 2 via the use of metaphors referring to the government as explicitly bad-RESP.88, '. Bad government, bad governor, bad senator, bad democracy...'. RESP.127; '*...a Govt that is killing their citizens through hunger and insecurity...*'. The use of metonymy, litotes and paradox by RESP. 80: 'Let them go and vaccinate all the cows since this government values more than humans.' The arguments above stem from the allegation that the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari, a Northerner from the Fulani tribe, who are predominantly nomadic cow herders, has not done enough to control the incessant killings by Fulani herders who attacked farmers in various parts of Nigeria (Erondu & Nwakanma, 2018; Bello & Abdulahi, 2021). Consequently, insecurity is metaphorically presented as a much deadlier disease than COVID-19. See RESP. 46; 'There are many diseases that kill (sic) more than COVID-19, those diseases are: 1. herdsmen, 2 (sic). boko Haram...'. These framing strategies are equally perspectivization strategies to communicate the respondents' cognitive views of the government as irresponsible over human lives, hence the topos of abstaining from the COVID-19 inoculation exercise.

The use of dialectics and phoric expressions, such as: 'them,' 'their,' 'they,' 'your' by RESP. 80, 111, 127 and 160, referring to the Nigerian government, are discourse markers denouncing the claims of alleged bad leadership, which does not value human lives. Further, similar discourse markers: 'we,' 'us' and 'our' are utilized as in-group markers to state what the respondents expect from the Nigerian government. Take, for instance, RESP. 190. 'COVID-19 vaccine is not the(sic) Nigeria's problem; our problem is to finish Boko Haram, kidnappers, hensmen(sic), youth employment, construction of road and minimum wage.' RESP. 59., 'All we wants (sic) from you(government) is the provision of social amenities...'. RESP. 79 'We need good jobs to feed our families, not vaccines.' Obviously, COVID-19 vaccination is discursively constructed as the least important item in the hierarchy of life-threatening problems facing Nigerians. The Nigerian government is predicatively attributed as inactive, irresponsible, an institution with little regard for human lives. Hence, the ideological perspectivization of the COVID-19 vaccine is unimportant. Consequently, respondents use intensified assertive statements to buttress their views.

4.2.3. OBO Negative Health Implications

Another aspect of the discussion bothers claims versus topos of negative health implications of the COVID-19 vaccine, hence its rejection. The argument relates to claims that the vaccine may be dangerous to health, presuppositions and false alarms about its side effects, vaccine's potency and general safety of the vaccine. The following reactions address the arguments:

- RESP.18: '*I don't advise anyone to take it because even if the vaccine is good, we can't trust Nigeria's storage facility. Imagine them can give u vaccine wey don soure, u (sic) turn to a Pilar of salt in your sleep...lol!*'

- RESP.52: Anybody who takes the vaccine can never have children in his or her life forever. Beware of that vaccine. Thanks.
- RESP. 57: *2 person(sic) dead after taking d (sic)vaccine @ south corea(sic) due to their (sic) ill Heath(sic); my question now is how ready is Nigerian(sic) to test individual health system of every Nigerians(sic) to know whether d vaccine (sic) will match there system or not .yesterday headline*
- RESP. 103: *How do you people know that it is safe? Do you people have the equipment to examine the vaccine? I hate rubbish.*
- RESP. 104: *If it's safe and good, why is it that most countries are rejecting it? We have more serious diseases and yet no vaccine like malaria that kills thousands of people. Something is not right at all.*
- RESP. 105: *Why background research and test runs did you do to make such a blanket statement? You just depend on wot(sic) someone else where said n conclude. That's not medical or scientific practice.'*
- RESP. 141: *It is safe and u people put on facemasks. I pity u guys.*
- RESP. 148: *Please, it is no good. This vaccination is a sickness.*
- RESP. 178: *Don't mind, that is vitamin c; they are telling us it is the COVID-19 vaccine. Pls, my good people of Nigeria, we should carefully & shine our eyes, my neighbors told me his friend took it for one week he cannot come to work. Ooooo, God will help us.*
- RESP. 180: *Since one of my Aunties took that vaccine, she has been complaining of chest pain and a lot of changes in her system; God help us.*

A predominant aspect of discourse topic 3 is the preponderance of predication devices of allusions, presuppositions and implications, qualifying COVID-19 vaccine negatively and Nigerian government as a deceiver. Allusions and claims that the vaccine is capable of turning its recipients into a 'pillar of salt' (The New King James Version 2020, Genesis 19) by RESP. 18; RESP. 57, '2 person(sic) dead after taking d (sic)vaccine @ south corea(sic)...' Presuppositions and hyperbole that the vaccine causes infertility and other health risks by RESP 52, 178 and 180. The metaphor by RESP. 148; that: 'vaccination is sickness.' Unverified negative claims and references about relatives who took the vaccine and fell ill are meant to serve as a scary deterrent and propaganda to individuals who may be willing to take the COVID-19 vaccine. Take, for instance, RESP. 178. '...pls my good people of Nigeria we should carefully & shine our eyes, my neighbors told me his friend took it for one week he cannot come to work ooooo God will help us', RESP.180. 'Since one of my Aunty took that vaccine, she has been complaining of chest pain and a lot of changes in her system; God help us.' There is a general topos and implicature that since the vaccine could be dangerous to health, there is no point taking it.

4.2.4. OBO Religious Beliefs

Those who object to COVID-19 vaccination on religious grounds do so on two bases:

- First, for preference in supernatural healing and
- Secondly, on the basis that the vaccine is 'anti-Christ's vaccine.'

Some samples are presented below:

- RESP. 10: *For me and my family, we certainly don't need it; we are 100% OK; God has given us victory over sickness and disease.*
- RESP.14: *I and my family have already been vaccinated with the blood of Jesus.*
- RESP.27: *God will not make me, my family members or well-wishers use this vaccine in Jesus's name.*
- RESP.55: *Since COVID-19 started, I have been protected by God, so no need for any vaccine. We grab all your plans and may God punish anyone (sic) that's trying to force or vaccinate anybody.*
- RESP.62: *I and my family don't want the COVID-19 Vaccine Park and go. It is only God that protects us, not your vaccine.*
- RESP.114: *Don't repent by deceiving yourself with vaccines; why will the dead not keep burying their dead? JESUS is the only way to healthy living and to eternal life. Why do you keep creating problems for yourself? Enough of this ignorance. Repent, or you perish.*

Evidently, Nigerians are very religious people and believe in supernatural healing rather than opting for the vaccine. In the texts above, the use of dialectics and anaphoric expressions, which emphasize topos of absolute dependence on divine healing rather than taking the vaccine, abound. These include: 'I and my family,' 'me,' and 'my family' used as in-group markers to distance the respondents from the vaccine and lay claims on supernatural interventions. In the arguments by RESP 10, who metaphorically states, '...God has given us victory over sickness and disease', RESP 14; 'I and my family have already been vaccinated with the blood of Jesus.' While RESP. 55 and 62 insist that their protection is from God, not the vaccine, RESP. 114. argues: '...JESUS is the only way to healthy living...' The use of such metaphors is to draw comparisons that emphasize the topos of supernatural healing over the COVID-19 vaccination.

Moreover, the use of hyperbole and allusion as predication devices, which exaggerates the vaccine as the 'end time mark of the beast,' '666' in Christianity (The New King James Version 2020, Revelations 13:18), predominates the discourse below. See RESP. 179, 184 and 192.

- RESP. 179: *The Bible said that when the end time comes, a sign of beast 999 and 666 will be given to those that belong to the devil. Is this the time? I look before you cross Lagos Express Road.*
- RESP. 184: *Hmmmmmm, are we even sure that what they gave is the covid vaccine? Brethren, let's stand firm; let no one deceive us cos we are in the last days. I come in peace.*

- RESP. 192: *The Revelation John saw and wrote about has come to fulfillment... "666" mark...if you are about to travel overseas, you must obtain a COVID-19 certificate, and soon the order will translate to every other thing...Children of God do not slumber. "WATCH AND PRAY"*

There is an exaggerated claim that the COVID-19 vaccine may be a means of inoculating those who belong to the devil. Consequently, respondents frame the vaccine as a mark of eternal damnation. Apparently, RESP. 192 argues that COVID-19 vaccination may become a yardstick to travel abroad and apply to every other activity in the country in such a way that nothing can be done without first presenting the COVID-19 vaccination certificate, just the way the 'mark of the beast, 666' would be used. Obviously, the speech acts are intensified.

4.2.5. OBO Depopulation/Conspiracy Myth

OBO on depopulation and conspiracy is a widespread claim among Nigerians about the COVID-19 vaccination. Proponents of this belief insist that the COVID-19 phenomenon is a premeditated plan by the Western world and certain world influencers to bring the pandemic and depopulate the world. Moreover, the teeming African continent is a major target of such dastardly acts. Hence, the topo that the Covid-19 vaccine should be rejected as it symbolizes 'death.' The following samples demonstrate such arguments:

- RESP. 21: *We have early (sic) been warned about this COVID-19 of a thing; some people are saying it is a suicide mission to depopulate Nigeria*
- RESP. 22: *This must be verified and who is the manufacturer; anything to do with Bill Gates and his group must be avoided. Let all government and health officers be the first to take it. God, pls, expose every conspiracy.*
- RESP. 41: *Business for the developed countries. They brought the virus and now they're selling the vaccine to us. Wise up our leaders!*
- RESP. 69: *Why our government call leaders what to kill us What did we do (sic) to them the eat our money and what to kill us our people; pls don't let them do that.*
- RESP. 73: *On COVID-19 Vaccines, it is an injustice to target the vulnerable poor in view of the fact over the years, the poor have been suffering and dying of Typhoid, Malaria and Ulcers through those years, NCDC was absent; why should we take vaccines for other people...*
- RESP. 76: *Introducing weapons of mass destruction as if the killings of biko haram are not enough. May God punish you wicked leaders for selling Nigerians for nothing.*
- RESP. 99: *You have brought a virus that can kill Nigerians with this your evil called vaccine. But God in heaven will protect His people and He will expose you all to His glory.*
- RESP. 156: *Where are we going in this country? Giving covenant in injection? Is it proper to give? We should be careful about this COVID-19 issue; all I pray about this country is God save your children, baba god we Dey your hand oh.*
- RESP. 168: *The youths, be careful... the vaccine is for the youths. They want to reduce the number of that crowd they saw during END sars. BE WHERE...*

Certain nomination devices such as dialectics, phoric expressions and anthroponyms are used as in-group markers to show empathy in the texts above. For instance: 'we,' 'us' 'vulnerable masses', and 'the poor' by RESP. 21, 41, 156, 73 and 76 and to further initiate social distance between them and the perceived social actors; 'Billgates and his group,' 'all government and health officers' 'developed countries,' 'wicked leaders,' (RESP 21, 41). On the other hand, the respondents metaphorically frame the event of COVID-19 vaccination and the vaccine as a 'suicide mission to depopulate Nigeria,' 'business for developed countries,' 'injustice,' 'weapon of mass destruction,' 'selling Nigerians for nothing,' 'evil called vaccine' and 'covenant injection', see RESP. 21, 41, 73, 76, 99 and 156, respectively. Consequently, engaging the above nomination and predication strategies upholds a negative perspectivization of the vaccine as a weapon of destruction and conspiracy.

In summary, other aspects of the study outlined other factors which could be the reasons for the rejection of the COVID-19 vaccine in Nigeria. These have attracted minimal responses: ethnic marginalization (1.5%), No Covid-19 (5%), Neutral response (9%) and only about (8%) of the respondents gave strong support for the COVID-19 vaccination, comprising sixteen positive responses, which range from responses encouraging the government, to compliments that the vaccine has been received or is expected to be received.

4.3. Historical-Contextual Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis of NCDC's COVID-19 vaccination updates on Facebook goes beyond mere daily informative routine to the Nigerian populace to a much more complex phenomenon, subtly rooted in unveiling unequal power relations and further transmutes into dialectical power tussles. Amidst the efforts of NCDC to portray itself as capable and willing to curb the pandemic, discourse topics relating to past and present unpleasant social events, such as corruption, greed, insensitivity of the government, fraud, ethnicism, selfishness on the part of Nigerian leaders, misconstrued beliefs and misinformation about the vaccine, erroneous religious beliefs and sheer cynicism on the part of the Nigerian masses, may have contributed largely to the resistance of the vaccination exercise, as demonstrated via the data analysed in the study. Take, for instance, the mass killings, kidnap for ransom and violence daily perpetrated against Nigerians. Within the first quarter of 2021, about 1,525 Nigerians were killed (Vanguard Newspaper, February 27, 2023). By the end of 2022, the total number of slain persons by non-state actors rose to 4,545, with kidnap cases rising to 4,611 (Premium Times, April 13, 2022; The Cable, January 18, 2023). The National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria (2022) reports that 65% of persons living in Nigeria (133 million people) are multidimensionally poor and the unemployment rate rising

to 9.71% in 2021 (Statista, 2023). Based on these backdrops and coupled with the alleged discoveries of COVID-19 relief materials believed to have been hoarded by various state governments during the 2020 'EndSARS Protest' and were looted by the crowds of protesters (see p.17). Consequently, these social events have translated into mind control systems that the government is selfish and unprotective and have been foregrounded as negative ideologies, which hampered not just the COVID-19 inoculation exercise but may negatively impact other beneficial initiatives taken by the Nigerian government.

5. Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that NCDC engaged vital nomination strategies, such as proper nouns, dialectics, phoric expressions and professional anthroponyms, to foreground an ideological perspectivization of itself as health proactive experts, solution providers and health interventionists, responsibly curbing the pandemic. On the other hand, some pressing socio-political issues in Nigeria in the past and within the period of the pandemic formed several discourse topics as intertexts crystalising into claims and topos for the rejection of the COVID-19 vaccination. Arguments ranging from the insecurity of lives and property, negligence of the government for citizens' rights, and poor governance, among other reasons, have foregrounded the ideology of alleged vaccine rejection among Nigerians. The use of dietics, phoric expressions and tropes such metaphors, hyperboles, similes, litoes, presuppositions and implicatures were largely utilized by the respondents as naming and perspectivization strategies to portray the COVID-19 vaccine as dangerous and the Nigerian government as evil, selfish and irresponsible, hence the need to abstain from the COVID-19 vaccination exercise. The study argues that COVID-19 vaccination abstinence in Nigeria, among other factors, is mainly predicated on perceived power imbalance and grievances towards the Nigerian government by the masses and that even the arguments are forms of protests for the social-political rights of the people.

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