

Language and the Ideological Representations in Selected Songs of Folarin Falana (FALZ)

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Abstract

This paper examines language and ideology in selected Hip-hop songs Nigeria. Even though Hip-hop has attracted a wide range of scholarly interests, existing works have not adequately examined its role in social engineering. Driven by van Leeuwen's Socio-Semantic Model, the paper examines 8 tracks (purposively selected for their messages) of Folarin Falana (FALZ), downloaded from <https://genius.com>. This is with the view to accounting for the ideological role in social reformation and national development. Five categories of social actors, namely; individuals, civil/public servants, professionals, leaders/leadership, groups/bodies, were identified and ideologically presented as perpetrators negative social actions such as corruption, fraud, favouritism, killing and ethnicity. Nominal and pronominal elements were employed to reveal social

actors, while verbs and adjectives were employed to expose, accuse and condemn the negative actions. The study concludes that Hip-hop is socially and politically correct in Nigeria because helps to promote social wellness and national development.

Keywords: Hip-hop music; ideology, Social wellness, Social actors, Folarin Falana (FALZ)

1. Introduction

Music is one of major activities of man and it is an integral part of all human cultures (Cross & Woodruff 2009). The love for music is common to man irrespective of differences in religious persuasion, ethnic diversity, age, class or creed. Music is both a science and an art. As a science, music involves the use of the brain; it has therapeutic value and as such, contributes to wellbeing (Macdonald, 2013). As an expressive art, its utilitarian value transcends mere entertainment activity; it has socio-cultural significance and it performs communicative functions. From time immemorial, music has been a means of relaxation all over the world and its role in the promotion of cultural heritage and social wellness cannot be over stressed (Deutsch and Deutsch 2015). Music is interactive and participatory and, it affects those who engage in it emotionally (see, e.g., Feld & Fox, 1994; Tilton, 1996; Nettl, 2005). Music is not monolithic; it is a dynamic and highly diversified profession with many genres such as Reggae, Pop, R&B, Gospel, Hip-hop, etc. Local genres of music in Nigeria include Jùjú, Apala, Fújì, Asiko, Afrobeat, etc.

The Nigerian music industry is a major foreign exchange earner to the Nigerian economy. Like sports, especially football, it is one of the major means by which the cultural richness of Nigeria is projected to the outside world. Nigerian musicians have won several international awards and these have greatly enhanced the country's international profile. The

Nigerian music industry is a big one and it is highly diversified. It is a reflection of the ethno-linguistic diversity of Nigeria with an estimate of over 400 ethnic-based languages (Jowit 2000, Akindele and Adegbite 1999, Adegbite 2003)). Nigerian musicians are highly creative and they cannot be easily classified along ethno-linguistic lines because a lot of them perform in a blend of English, Pidgin and local languages. Also, the works of Nigerian artists cannot be easily classified under any particular music genre as their performance is often a hybrid of several genres. Most of them migrate easily from one genre to another depending on the genre that is in trend in the society. They are ever mindful of trends to achieve excellence in their trade as they deploy their creative ingenuity to explore the socio-political situations in the country to produce hit tracks. Locally, Nigerian musician have continued to satisfy the domestic needs of the teeming Nigerian populace. They not only blend the local languages, English and Pidgin, they also make use of elements and styles of existing local and folk music to produce hybrids which appeal to people from various ethno-linguistic divides of the country.

Over the years, social dynamics has brought about the emergence of a music genre called the Hip-hop. Hip-hop is a genre of popular music which began in the United States of America in the early 1970's. It is a type of chants or rhythmic speech also known as rap. Stylistically, it involves rapping, scratching with turntables, break dancing and graffiti writing. By the 1980's, Hip-hop became popular in the American society especially among the youths who saw it as an avenue to speak about the social issues faced by the young African Americans. The 1990's however, brought a twist to it with the mainstream success of gangsta rap, where drugs, violence, and misogyny became more prominent. Moving into the 2000s, rap and Hip-hop crossed genre boundaries by incorporating aspects of other genres in its performance (see Boyer, 2016). It also crossed cultural boundaries penetrating Africa and other parts of the world.

Hip-hop music, which is one of the popular music genres in contemporary Nigeria, can be traced back to the 1990s. According to Rose, (1994), cited in Adedeji, (2017: 34), Hip-hop originated from South Bronx of New York City in the early 1970s as a cultural form and an attempt to “negotiate the experiences of marginalization, brutality, truncated opportunity, and oppression within cultural imperatives of African-American and Caribbean history, identity and community”. The case is not different in Nigeria where the music genre became not only an outlet for the people to diffuse tension and ventilate their frustration about the harsh economic condition and the political uncertainties that enveloped the postcolonial Nigeria, but also a means of livelihood to the teeming youth. Another factor that contributed to the popularisation of Hip hop in Nigeria is the digital technology that has enhanced the production and duplication of music. It is interesting to note that a Nigerianised version of the genre called ‘Afro Hip hop’ has been created. As a flexible genre of music, Hip-hop allows for creativity. In Nigeria for example, young and upcoming musicians were able to create hybrids by combining Hip-hop with indigenous genres such as Juju, Highlife, Afrobeat and Fújì with a blend of English, local languages as well as pidgin.

However, since inception, the public perception of Hip-hop has tilted towards its negative socio-cultural integrity and much of scholarly publications so far have also examined the music genre from this angle. Hip-hop has been criticised for its sexually explicit, rape/sexual assault, sexual conquest and derogatory lyrics (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009; Cobb & Boettcher, 2007 and Cundiff 2013) and for its misogynistic content or representation of women as objects “that are only good for sex and abuse” and as usable and discardable beings (Adams and Fuller 2006). As observed by Smith (2005),

Young adults between the ages of 16 and 30 are the most likely age group to consume rap/hip-hop music, and in turn, may become desensitized to the derogatory lyrics condoning relationship violence and sexual aggression

The music is also linked to the increase in cases of violence, prostitution, broken homes, internet fraud, etc. It is further criticised for its television content which exposes the audience to violent images and as such influences their views and conception of social reality (Rosenberry & Vicker, 2009).

Scholarly contributions to the literature on Hip-hop in Nigeria include Onyeji (2002) which focuses on the types and performance practice of popular music and musicians in Nigeria, Omoniyi (2009) accounts for language and post-colonial identities in Hip-hop cultures while Adeola (2011) examines the Nigerian popular music and its role in national development. Also, Shonekan (2013) investigates the perceived benefits the American Hip-hop culture in Nigeria, and observes that there are some issues related to cultural imperialism with attendant effect on local identity and creativity. Adedeji (2017) interrogates the relationship between music, identity, language appropriation and culture with particular reference to the Yoruba socio-cultural identity reformulation as reflected in the music of *Ruggedman* and Femi Abiodun (2018) examines the level of musical and non-musical growth in relation to the development of popular music in Nigeria.

The above has revealed a gap in scholarship in that adequate attention has not been given to the examination of the utilitarian value of Hip-hop. This paper therefore, investigates the utilitarian benefits of Hip-hop as a socio-political tool for the social engineering of the Nigerian society to enhance national development. It examines selected songs of Folarin Falana (FALZ) with the view to accounting for its utilitarian value in socio-political reformation in Nigeria thereby enhancing national development.

2. Folarin Falana (FALZ) and Music for Social Reformation

Folarin (popularly known as FALZ) was born on October 27th 1990 by Femi Falana, Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) and human right activist. He began his educational career at St. Leo's Catholic Primary School, Ikeja, after which he proceeded to Oladele Olashore International school, Iloko Ijesha, for his secondary education. He is a graduate of Law from the University of Reading, England and he was called to bar in 2012. Folarin has been a lover of music right from his secondary school where he started a music group called 'The School Boys' with his friends. FALZ came to limelight and became a successful Hip-hop artiste with his debut album titled *Waz Up Guy* was released in 2014. This was followed by *Ello Bae* (2015), *This is Nigeria* (2018), *Moral Instruction* (2019) and *High Class and Currency* (2019). His music is popular among the youths especially because of his stance as a moral crusader and social critic. He has won several awards.

3. Methodology

The data for this work are songs of Folarin Falana (FALZ). Two audio compact discs (one album and one single track) were bought from a music vendor. Altogether, there are ten (10) tracks in the two discs; nine from the album titled *Moral Instruction* (2019) and one (1) the single track titled *This is Nigeria* (2018). The researcher listened to the songs and purposively selected eight (8) tracks based on the message of social engineering therein. Seven (7) tracks were selected from *moral instruction* in addition to the single track titled *this is Nigeria*. The selected songs include *Amen*, *Hypocrites*, *Talk*, *Brother's Keeper*, *Paper*, *E no Finish*, *Johnny Lyrics* and *this is Nigeria*. The lyrics were subsequently downloaded from <https://genius.com> and subjected them to ideological analysis driven by van Leeuwen's Socio-Semantic Model of Critical Discourse Analysis.

4. Theoretical Ground

This study is driven by Theo van Leeuwen's Socio-Semantic Model of Critical Discourse Analysis developed for analysing social actors. Critical Linguistics (CL) or Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which began at the University of East Anglia in the mid-1970s (van Leeuwen, 2009:279), is a kind of discourse analysis that tends to study how social practices such as power abuse, dominance, and inequality are reproduced, and represented on the basis of written or spoken discourse in the social and political context (Van Dijk 2003:352). CDA is based on the idea that our language usage encodes ideological patterns and that language is not just a means of communication, rather, a representation of our dynamic and objective reality. This implies that our language acts are means by which we influence people's thoughts and beliefs; it is a control device that reflect one form of ideology or the other. Prominent approaches to CDA include Norman Fairclough's Critical Linguistics, Teun Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Model, Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical/Sociolinguistic Model, and the Theo van Leeuwen's Socio-Semantic Model known as the Social Actors Approach (SAA) which is our model of analysis in the paper. According to Leeuwen (2008:5) "discourses are social cognitions, socially specific ways of knowing social practices, they can be, and are, used as resources for representing social practices in text." And he defines social practices as socially regulated ways of doing things. Social Actor model therefore has to do with the way social actors are described or represented sociologically and critically in discourses. Van Leeuwen describes social actors as human beings that are represented as participants in clauses and can be represented as subjects (agents) or objects (goals) in the clause (Baker & Ellege, 2011:133). Thus, an actor is represented as a particular individual or as a kind of a person that is located in a discourse (van Leeuwen, 2008:6). The SAA involves the way in which text producers communicate their intentions by employing

language to ideologically construct social actors in discourses. The framework is useful in accounting for the role and ideological orientations of individuals in texts using socio-semantic processes/mechanisms such as activation and passivation, *genericisation* and *specification*, *assimilation*, *association* and *dissociation*, *intertermination* and *differentiation*, *nomination* and *categorisation*, *functionalisation* and *identification and overdetermination*.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

A critical examination of selected songs of FALZ reveals that he employs his music as a tool for socio-political reformation driven by utilitarian ideology. Utilitarianism is a theory of normative ethics that is generally held to be the view that the morally right action is the action that produces the most good. It is a form of consequentialism that argues that an action is judged right or wrong based on its consequences. It that holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness (see Driver, 2009; Crisp 1998). FALZ assumes the position of a moral reformer to advance this theory in his songs by criticising and condemning actors and actions that tends to negatively impact on the general good and wellbeing of the society. Five categories of social actors namely; individuals (revealed in the pronominal choices), civil/public servants (revealed through nominalization), professionals (revealed in nominal choices), leaders/leadership (revealed through pronominal choices), groups/bodies (revealed in nominal and pronominal choices) are identified in the data. Also, corruption, fraud, embezzlement, killing, kidnapping, assassination, drug peddling, exploitation, greed, deception, hypocrisy, favouritism, nepotism, ethnicity and so on are social actions opposed to the happiness and pleasure of the society. Let us examine some excerpts.

Excerpt 1

All because you want to live the faaji life

You ready to pay the price
Do the sacrifice
You ready to pay the price
Take your mama life
And even you no fit explain this your appetite
You want the benz
You no wan take the taxify
You wan order gold bottles
Enh.. Maybe 35
You wan halla private jet things
When you catch flight
Now you don dey shey weyrey lonson
You don dey bark for night
Skeletons in your closet
You murder to show super
All the wraps of powder
You swallow to pass border
All the person pikin you carry for tight corner

Paper

Excerpt 2

Wey da Madam Philomena
Money vanish from your office
36 milli you talk say na animal

This is Nigeria

Excerpt 3

*I see you when you collect
Egunje Oga olopa
Dem say you talk say you dey find raba
And so you go and dip your two hands in foul matter
Oga this one you dey do
E pass arm robber
You turn criminal
Because you want to show dollar*

Paper

Excerpt 4

*Who stand for road? make I horn o
Na `in popo shout!
“park there! wey your particulars? and where
do you think that you’re going like this?”
“Una don run go chop life oya give me my share!”
Before dem talk one he say “shut up! Small boy!
Who dash you liver? talk more I go cork gun”
Small time he don pull trigger ah!
He don kill am o!
Johnny just drop
Na popo shoot am down
This motherfucking trigger happy nigga
Just cause unnecessary sorrow for him family sha
All because dem no oblige you
When you ask for some cash*

*No fucking threats no weapons
Just him and his guys in his car
You have the guts to tell me
You accidentally discharged?
Madman! waka! you be bloody bastard!
You waste a life and try to tell me
That you sorry after*

Excerpt 5

*You carry million dollar
Keep put for house
When many brother
Never see food to chow
And many sister come dey prostitute for am*

E no finish

Excerpt 6

*Na me be your problem
If you no know
Make you check well
I no give you light since
Because I want to sell fuel
And if to say you get light
Then you no go buy generator
I be criminal
...
I'm so heartless*

I'm probably the biggest kind of monster in the whole planet

Brother's keeper

Excerpt 7

Pharmacists dey sell some fake drug

I no send if people die

As long as I dey make buck

Brother's keeper

Excerpt 8

You want to chop national cake

You dey pray for contract

Dem give you Ghana must go

Make you change the number

Voting never start

You don dey say your congrats

Paper

FALZ examines the issue of corruption and criminality from the ideological perspective as he constructs them as dangerous, evil and retrogressive. He employs the second person pronoun (subj) 'you' and the possessive 'your' (to give it a general application) to identify the actors and he constructs them as enjoyment (*faaji*) seekers who get involved in criminal acts. According to him those who engage in these acts do so in a bid to be successful in life.

All because you want to live the faaji life;

You want the benz

You wan halla private jet things;

You wan order gold bottles

FALZ also employs the second person pronoun “you”, to talk directly to those who are one way or the other involved in these acts. He exposes, criticizes and condemns those (actors) who engage in criminal acts such as killing, kidnapping, assassination and so on. The verbal elements (in bold font) in the examples below are used to expose, accuse and condemn the actions as well as the actors.

*You **ready** to pay the price*

***Do** the sacrifice;*

***Take** your mama life;*

*You **murder** to show super;*

*All the person pikin you **carry** for tight corner;*

FALZ also identifies those who trade in hard drugs (peddlers) such as cocaine, heroin, and marijuana/cannabis, and those who take them (smokers). He presented drug peddling ideologically as an offence against humanity and an evil against the society.

All the wraps of powder

*You **swallow** to pass border*

Another action in the songs of FALZ is the menace of young men (yahoo boys/“419”) who indulge in advanced fee fraud or internet fraud. This also include the group called *Yahoo Plus* in local parlance, whose members employ voodoo and engage in ritual practices such as ritual killings for money making. FALZ warns those who indulge in these acts to desist before their actions backfire. According to FALZ, nemesis often catches up with them as they are either caught in the act or their evil acts may backfire resulting in manifestation abnormal behaviour such as madness, hallucination and schizophrenia.

Now you don dey shey weyrey lonson (You manifest acts of madness during the day)

You don dey bark for night (You bark at night)

Also very significant in the excerpts above is the deployment of the pronoun ‘you’ in some socio-semantic processes such as personalisation, activation, individualisation and assimilation. For example, the use of the pronoun ‘you’ demonstrate the strategy of *personalisation* and *individualisation* (social actors as a person or an individual), and *assimilation* (social actors as groups) as in plural ‘you’ (Van Leeuwen 2008: 24).

***You** swallow to pass border*

***You** murder to chow super*

Through the strategy of *activation* social actors are presented as the active agent/dynamic force in an activity. Note that the pronoun ‘you’ is the subject of the verbs *swallow* and *murder* in the examples above.

Another category of social actors identified in the selected songs are the civil/public servants (individuals and group) ideologically presented as agents of corruption. An example is Madam Philomena (excerpt 2) who embezzled the public funds under her watch claiming that the money disappeared in mysterious circumstance. Madam Philomena represents the civil/public servants who misappropriate, misapplied, or even embezzle public funds in their care. There is also institutional corruption as typified by the “Oga Olopa” (police officer) who uses his position to demand and collect bribe from people. The speaker (artist) confronts the addressee (Oga Olopa) with an accusation about his/her engagement in the collection of bribe. In the examples below (Excerpt 3), the verbal elements (in bold font) are employed to expose and condemn the actions.

*I see you when you **collect**...*

Oga this one you dey do

E pass arm robber

*You **turn** criminal*

The act of corruption is also seen in excerpt 4 where Popo (a policeman) committed professional/ethical misconduct by demanding bribe from motorists.

“Una don run go chop life oya give me my share!”

FALZ assumes the position of an observer and reporter in this excerpt

He don kill am o!

Johnny just drop

Na popo shoot am down

He condemns the action of a security man who was charged with the responsibility of providing security for the people but who turned round to kill innocent citizens while demanding gratification. Note the verbal element ‘don kill’ (has killed) and ‘drop’ (died) and ‘shoot’ which capture the action.

Excerpt 5 is a subtle criticism and condemnation of stealing of public funds and man’s inhumanity to man. Quite important in achieving his objective of exposing and condemning negative acts, is the use of the verb ‘carry’ and ‘keep’. Money stolen from public coffers are either diverted to private use or transferred into foreign accounts. However, in recent times, due to financial restrictions, those who engage in this act are no longer able to keep their loot in their bank account. They keep the cash at home to avoid being traced. FALZ also exposes the act of selfishness or insensitivity on the part of some government officials who are saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that citizens enjoy public utilities, but who used such as an opportunity to exploit the people they are meant to cater for (excerpt 6). Through the strategy of *activation*, FALZ assumes the personal voice (VCE) of an official boasting about the untold hardship he deliberately brought on innocent citizens. Note the nominal elements (problem, heartless and monster) used by the official to describe himself in the excerpt below:

Na me be your problem

I'm so heartless

I'm probably the biggest kind of monster in the whole planet

Professionals are not left out of the searchlight of FALZ on the problem of corruption in Nigerian society. This category is typified by the Pharmacists who engage in the selling of fake drugs knowing full well the implications (Excerpt 7). He also blames the political woes of the country on some actors such as the electoral officials who collect bribe to falsify election results (Excerpt 8), political leaders and the electorates who allowed themselves to be manipulated and induced to vote against their consciences (Excerpt 4). From ideological perspective, FALZ employs his music to preach a just and egalitarian Nigerian society where individuals should engage in lawful business and be useful to his/her fellow citizens. He craves for a society in which the right of individuals should be respected, where individuals should cultivate the virtue of patience and where collectivism takes precedence over individualism.

Another aspect of socio-political reformation as an ideological stance in the songs of FALZ is in the area of religion and ethnic diversity. Nigeria is a multilingual and multi-ethnic nation with over 250 ethnic groups and between 200 and 400 indigenous languages (Jowitt, 2000:9 and Adegbite, 2004:19). This situation, which is supposed to be a source of strength and a national pride, has created so much tension threatening the peace and unity of the nation. Nigeria's multilingual and multi-ethnic structure is a major source of conflict and an obstacle to socio-political and economic development. It is also of note and quite relevant here, that Nigeria is a religious pluralistic nation. As a social institution, religion is tied to tribal solidarity in Nigeria. The two dominant religions (Christianity and Islam) are practiced along ethnic lines. For example, the Hausa-Fulani who occupies the Northern part of the country are predominantly Muslims while the Yorubas, Ibos and other tribes who occupy the Southern part of the country are predominantly Christians. Religion has become an albatross

challenging the existence of the country. Even though the major problems of Nigeria are ethno-economic, religion has played a significant role in fuelling these problems. Nigeria nation is therefore one that is plagued by religious woes because religious sentiments have beclouded the sense of reason of most citizens to the extent that every ethnic group tends to hide under the cloak of religion to advance its cause or position. One would have expected a peaceful nation going by the outward expression of religiosity by Nigerians; however, the reverse is the case. FALZ linked personal and institutional sins such as hypocrisy, deception, exploitation, greed, selfishness, disunity, etc, to the problems of religion and ethnicity in Nigeria. Let us examine some excerpts from the data.

Excerpt 9

Christian and corrupt no suppose be mixture

Real musulumi e no suppose dey thief jor

Real talk no be fight rara

Everybody get fault for inside matter

We dey talk human right

We no respect am

... Pastor wey dey do like say e no be sinner

See the speck in your eye no dey point finger

What about the really greedy politician

Acting like he really care for the layman

And what about even you voters, wey dey act like say you only see two jokers

Recycle the same corrupt men, later you complain you say you hate the government

Hypocrite

Excerpt 10

Take our offering set up Uni

And your church members can't even afford the school fee

Church plenty pass school for inside my estate

You sell hope

You sell faith

You sell dreams to get paid

Na congregation money

But dem no go see percentage

...He raises funds in the church

And keeps the money in his purse

Without giving to the church authorities”

Amen

Excerpt 11

Three private jet, you say you buy am for church

Eh eh, say you buy am for church

But your congregation no dey follow fly am of course

Eh eh, dem no dey follow fly am of course

Talk

Excerpt 12

Shey I no be person

Cause no be your tribe I come from?

Eh eh, Cause no be your tribe I come from

Small man thief for market

You set fire for em body

Big man thief money we dey hail am like dummy

Talk

Excerpt 13

Me I'm not my brother keeper

I no dey send my brother

Cause we no get the same mother

Eh yea

Me I'm not my brother's keeper

I no dey send my brother

We no get the same father

Yea

Na only me come this world

Brother's keeper

Excerpt 14

When my people start to kill each other

I go quiet

E no concern me

Crisis never reach my town yet

That one na one aspect

Brother's keeper

Excerpt 15

There is plenty Wahala sha

Fulani Herdsmen still they slaughter

Carry people they massacre

This is Nigeria

FALZ is criticises the two dominant religions (Christianity and Islam) for not living according to what they profess. Going by what these two religions preach, they are opposed to corruption and social vices as stealing. He observes that:

Christian and corrupt no suppose be mixture

Real musulumi e no suppose dey thief jor

Christians and Muslims are expected to live a life of holiness by abstaining from any form of corruption (sin). As can be seen in the excerpt above, FALZ queries the diametrical opposition between what they say and what they do.

FALZ criticises and condemns individuals and institutions for their role in the widespread corruption in the country. According to him, “everybody get fault for inside matter”. Actors identified include pastors (who pretend as saints), greedy politicians and voters (who connive to elect corrupt men in leadership positions). FALZ criticises and condemns some societal evils such as hypocrisy, pretension, deception, exploitations, greed, etc especially in religious places as shown in the table below.

Excerpt	Examples	Accusation
9	<i>Pastor wey dey do like say e no be sinner</i> <i>See the speck in your eye no dey point finger</i>	Pretension/Hypocrisy
10	<i>Take our offering set up Uni</i> <i>And your church members can't even afford the school fee</i> <i>... "He raises funds in the church</i> <i>And keeps the money in his purse</i> <i>Without giving to the church authorities"</i>	Exploitation, greed, diversion of institutional fund Fraud, stealing

11	<i>Three private jet, you say you buy am for church</i> <i>Eh eh, say you buy am for church</i> <i>But your congregation no dey follow fly am of course</i> <i>Eh eh, dem no dey follow fly am of course</i>	Exploitation, greed, deception, living in opulence at the expense of the masses
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FALZ deploys some linguistic elements to achieve some semantic process such as exposition, accusation and condemnation. For example, he lampooned greedy politicians who deceive the electorate to vote for them pretending to care for their welfare when they actually care only for their own selfish gains.

What about the really greedy politician

Acting like he really care for the layman (Excerpt 9)

He used the adjective ‘greedy’, which qualifies the noun ‘politician’, to accuse and condemn some politicians of greed and deception.

FALZ employs the verbs ‘recycle’ and ‘complain’ to accuse and condemn the masses/voters (... *act like say you only see two jokers*) of hypocrisy and complicity in the poor state of the socio-political system.

And what about even you voters, wey dey act like say you only see two jokers

Recycle the same corrupt men, later you complain you say you hate the government

(Excerpt 9)

Through the technique of direct address (*even you voters*) FALZ criticises the masses for failing to act wisely by using their votes to elect credible people into leadership/political positions. He accuses them of complicity in the entire scenarios by recycling corrupt men.

Closely linked to religion is ethnicity which is another national crisis. Excerpts 12 – 14 focus on ethnicity as a national challenge. FALZ condemns acts of inequality, hypocrisy, injustice or selective judgement that is prevalent in Nigeria. In excerpt 12, FALZ exposes the double standard and selective judgement in Nigeria. He gave the example of selective judgement meted out to two individuals who are guilty of stealing. Because of tribal and class solidarity, the privileged man (big man) stole (perhaps a larger amount) and was hailed, but when the ordinary citizen (small man) stole (perhaps a small amount), he was set ablaze. In excerpt 13, the unknown actor who identifies himself with the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘me’ behaves like an ethnic bigot, boasting that he cares less about what others feel and suffer because they are not from his family or ethnic group.

Me I'm not my brother keeper

I no dey send my brother

Also, the actor in excerpt 14, who is most likely a political leader, is not concerned when others who are not of his ethnic cleavage are being killed. FALZ uses these actors to expose and condemn ethnic solidarity that has beclouded national solidarity in Nigeria.

Related to this is the problem of insecurity and the attendant violence. FALZ acknowledges the enormity of this problem in excerpt 15. He complains and laments there are so many troubles (*plenty Wahala*) because of the activities of Fulani Herdsmen who engage in killing and kidnapping. Fulani herdsman related violence is a multi-dimensional security challenge in Nigeria. It includes cases of kidnappings, killings and violent clashes between herders and farmers in many parts of the country. The verb ‘carry’ (kidnap) and the nouns ‘slaughter’ and ‘massacre’ in the excerpt describe the nature of the actions and convey the cruelty and inhuman nature of those who engage in these acts of violence. FALZ argues from the ideological position to categorise and condemn the actors in the Fulani Herdsmen violence as criminals, cruel, inhuman and evil.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the socio-political significance of Hip-hop in Nigeria as a tool for social engineering to engender national development. The paper which examined selected songs of Falana Folarin (FALZ) from the theoretical angle of van Leeuwen's Socio-Semantic Model, aligns with existing views on the utilitarian value of music such as (Macdonald, 2013) who has observed that music has therapeutic value and it contributes to wellbeing. As revealed in the study, FALZ identified five categories of social actors, namely; individuals, civil/public servants, professionals, leaders/leadership, groups/bodies. The paper also identified corruption, exploitation, fraud, greed, deception, hypocrisy, favouritism, nepotism, killing, kidnapping, assassination and ethnicity as some of the social actions perpetuated by these social actors. Arguing from the ideological position of utilitarianism, FALZ presented the actors and their actions as evil and dangerous, anti-social and inimical to wellbeing and national development. Apart from nominal and pronominal elements which were employed to reveal social actors, verbs and adjectives were employed by FALZ to expose, accuse and condemn the negative actions. FALZ assumes the position of a socio-political crusader/reformer to criticise and condemn social actors and actions that have impacted negatively on Nigeria's socio-political and economic wellbeing. In conclusion, the study, which deviates from existing works that have hitherto concentrated on the negative socio-cultural integrity of Hip-hop, has shown that apart from the economic value of Hip-hop, the genre has a role to play in socio-political orientation of the Nigerian society towards actions that promotes social wellness and national development. To this end, Hip-hop is socially and politically correct.

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