

# Discursive Strategies for Discourse Representations of ASUU-FGN Impasse in Nigerian Newspapers

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## Abstract

This study provided discursive strategies which Nigerian newspapers employed to convey information about ASUU-FGN impasse to the news consumers. The discursive strategies succeeded in allotting discourse representations to ASUU and FGN in both positive and negative representations. The data for the study were collected from five Nigerian newspapers: *Leadership*, *Punch*, *The Guardian*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard*. The researcher selected one hundred published articles about ASUU-FGN impasse in the month of June, 2024 when the industrial disharmony between the two parties was hot. The researcher purposively sampled one hundred and thirteen data from ten randomly selected articles out of the one hundred published articles for the analysis. The researcher used Van Dijk's (2006) Socio-Cognitive Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data. The study revealed that ASUU and FGN were represented with discursive strategies with their percentage: victimisation (23%), abuse (16%), populism (13%), euphemism (12%), counterfeit (10%), consensus (9%), dramatisation (7%), metaphor (6%), disclaimer (3%), and comparison (1%). ASUU was represented as threatener (*The Nation*, *Punch*, *Vanguard*), sufferer (*The Nation*, *Punch*), advocate (*Leadership*, *Punch*), slammer (*Vanguard*), troublesome (*The Nation*), striker (*Punch*), observer (*Leadership*, *Punch*), teacher of unemployable graduates (*Punch*), greed (*The Nation*), warner (*Leadership*), peacemaker (*The Guardian*), informer (*The Guardian*), protester (*Vanguard*), the oppressed (*Punch*), slacker (*Punch*), liar (*Punch*). FGN was represented as renegade (*Punch*, *The Nation*), filibuster (*The Guardian*), oppressor (*The Guardian*), abandoner (*Leadership*), breacher (*Leadership*), proliferator (*Vanguard*), and dictator (*Punch*). The study concluded that naming calling arises where conflicts exists. The study therefore recommended that the two parties should imbibe ideas of honouring agreement to allow name calling cease and peace reign.

**Keywords:** Discourse, Representations, Strategies, Victimisation, Abuse.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Impasse between ASUU and FGN which always makes front page of national dailies in Nigeria, is dated back to 1980, the time when ASUU declared a trade dispute and made the issue of autonomy the spine of the conflict. Egbokhare (2001) mentioned that in December 1980, President Shehu Shagari directed Council of the University of Lagos to sack six senior lecturers following Justice Belonwus Visitation Panel Report. ASUU protested and pressed for reinstatement of the suspended members.

Unya (2016) stated that between 1980 and 1981, ASUU had a struggle with Shagari-led administration about funding, salaries, autonomy, brain drain and the survival of the university system. Babalola (2007) reported that Buhari-Idiagbon regime retrenched and froze salaries of workers in 1985. ASUU supported

the affected staff, government arrested and detained leaders of ASUU. Kukah (2010) submitted that Babangida's regime imposed the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the harsh condition of the IMF loan on Nigeria, which caused crises in economy, education and health. ASUU opposed SAP and engaged government.

Fast forward to the advent of democratic era in 1999, ASUU confronted the same challenge. Ugwuona (2016) reported that the regime of Abdulsalam signed an agreement with ASUU on May 25, 1999. The government of Obasanjo sacked forty-nine ASUU members in University of Ilorin in 2001. Ilorin High Court ruled in favour of the forty-nine sacked lecturers but Obasanjo fumed and described ASUU as "a bunch of crazy and ungrateful people" (Makinde 2023). The issue of the sacked lecturers came up again in 2006, 2007, and

2008 cum demands for improved conditions of service. ASUU and FGN locked horn. In 2009, the administration of President Umar Musa Yar'Adua signed an agreement with the union. The agreement is popularly called FGN/ASUU 2009 Memorandum of Action. The failure of FGN to implement the agreement caused series of strikes in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. After partial implementation and expiration of the agreement, ASUU called for re-negotiation which led to strike in November 2018 to February 7, 2019. In 2020, ASUU went on strike in March and suspended in December of the year over imposition of IPPIS. In 2022, the union was on strike for eight months, agitating for re-negotiation and removal of university from IPPIS platform. Likewise, between February and June, 2024 ASUU had fumed to downtool and stampede FGN into action on its demands comprising payment of withheld salaries, constitution of Governing Councils, university autonomy and the likes.

The engagements of ASUU since 1980 till date are always reported in Nigerian print media. The conflicts are frequently expressed in a strategic way using language. Ogundeji (2023) noted that language is a tool for expression of meanings. Bloor and Bloor (2004) also stated that when speakers use language, their language acts produce meanings. Halliday (1985) submitted that a language is interpreted as a system of meanings accompanied by forms through which the meanings are realised. Ogundeji (2022) opined that the strategies of realising the meanings are within the ambit of the language users. This means that meaning negotiation can be derived from the form that language use assumes. This is the reason this study focused on the discursive strategies which the Nigerian newspapers employed for the representation of ASUU and FGN in the news reports. Van Dijk's notion of ideological square and its items are the discursive strategies the newspapers used to allot representation to ASUU and FGN. The discourse ideologies possess the qualities of showing the journalistic and discursive strategies which are implicitly expressed in Nigerian newspaper newspapers over ASUU-FGN impasse.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Ajayi (2014) examined ASUU Strike and Academic Performance of Students in Ekiti State University. The research used simple percentage to show that students bear the brunt following conflicts between ASUU and FGN. The study concluded that ASUU strikes have influence on performance of students in Ekiti State University, Ado- Ekiti. The reviewed literature is relevant in content but different in theory for the analysis. The current study shall use cohesion and CDA as core theoretical framework while simple percentage can only show the frequency distribution of data in each of the selected newspapers. Also ASUU strike constitutes a base for acrimony between ASUU and FGN of Nigeria which this study is to examine.

Ugwuona (2016) researched on 2013 ASUU Strike Discourse in Nigeria. The study deployed CDA to analyse data collected from web pages of the internet. The study identified ideologies in the discourses and concluded that journalists should use language of truth in discourse. The research stressed that appropriate use of language in the newspapers by the political commentators and the media houses and peaceful dialogue between the ASUU-FGN would be guaranteed. So, future ASUU strike in Nigeria will be deterred. The research shares direct relevance with this study in both theories and content.

Arua and Amuta (2018) investigated the Ideological Postures of the Academic Staff Union of Universities and the Federal Government of Nigeria in Industrial Dispute. The investigation deployed CDA identify various ideological postures adopted in correspondences between the ASUU and FGN between 2001 and 2009. Van Dijk's notion of ideological squares applied on the research showed that the data from both ASUU and the FG are ideologically polarised. The current study is also to analyse data using the same model of CDA. Therefore, the two studies share relevance.

Akinwotu (2019) investigated The Role of Discursive Constructions in Nigerias ASUU-FGN Labour Conflict of 2013. The study employed CDA and Conceptual Metaphor (CM) as framework for the data analysis. The study purposively collected data from the statements by ASUU and FGN officials and their supporters as published by Nigerian print and online news sources during the dispute as well as outlets editorial statements and readers online comments. The study found out that the labour dispute is discursively and metaphorically constructed in a militaristically toned style which presents the altercation between the parties as a war. The research concluded that both parties are propagandists in their militaristic discursive constructions. Similarly, the research showed that readers reproduce strands of the constructions in their online comments on media coverage of the strike action. This study shall obtain data from selected newspapers and shall use cohesion and CDA. Therefore, there is difference of analysis in the two studies.

Idahosa (2022) researched on Legitimisation of Language in 2020 ASUU vs FGN Impasse. The study investigated the linguistic resources deployed for Legitimisation in ASUU's press release of March 2020. The research deployed Spatial, Temporal and Axiological (STA) Model of legitimisation to analyse for proximation in the corpus. The analysis showed that the linguistic resources used in the speech represent predominant instances of STA dimensions. ASUU deploys linguistic features for positive proximation to justify its claims for protracted indefinite strike action and negative proximation when expressing its existential realities against the FGN in the university

system. The study concluded that judging from gory of realities in the education sector, the agitation of ASUU for better university education which Nigeria needs to give maximum attention. This study is relevant to the existing study in a way that they both research on language of ASUU. However, the sources of data collection, theoretical framework for the analysis and scope defer.

Makinde (2023) researched on Visual Representation of ASUU Strike in Nigeria. The study explored the semiotics of cartoons in selected Nigerian newspapers to examine meaning-making resources employed in the visual representation of ASUU strikes in Nigeria. The study gave analysis of how cartoonists manipulate symbols, signs and other semiotic resources to convey specific meanings through visual and textual representations. The research aligns with this study in many ways. It uses Nigerian newspapers as the current study does. It shows the meaning negotiations through visual representation. The difference is that the current research does not provide for analysis of visual-based data. Rather, the study focuses on discourse representation using socio-cognitive model of CDA to analyse ASUU-FGN impasse in the Nigerian newspapers.

### 3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher collected one hundred and thirteen (113) data from ten randomly selected articles out of one hundred published articles made available in the month of June, 2024. The newspapers comprised: *Leadership*, *Punch*, *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, and *Vanguard*. The collected data were expressions indicating discursive strategies whose representation for the data code was first three letters. The researcher adopted Van Dijk's (2006) Socio-Cognitive Model of Critical Discourse Analysis. The researcher carried out descriptive and qualitative data analysis to identify the discursive strategies deployed in the Nigerian newspapers and indicate discourse representations of ASUU and FGN.

### 3.2 Scope of the Study

The study was restricted to Van Dijk's (2006) notion of ideological square and Socio-Cognitive Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The ideologies were used as an approach to describe and analyse the data collected in the five selected newspapers. The newspapers were: *Leadership*, *Punch*, *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, and *Vanguard*. One hundred and thirteen (113) data were collected from ten randomly selected articles about ASUU-FGN impasse published in the month of June, 2024. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis was employed to identify discursive strategies

in the newspapers as well as indicate discourse representations of ASUU-FGN.

### 3.3 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Van Dijk's (2006) Socio-Cognitive Model of Critical Discourse Analysis for the analysis of the collected data. The Van Dijk's notion of ideological square is about "us-them" sub-divided into: emphasise our good deeds, de-emphasise our bad deeds, emphasise their bad deeds and de-emphasise their good deeds. The model also contains many other items which are discussed as follows:

**Victimisation** is a discourse ideology which discussants use to instill fear or threaten the out-group. It is marked with expressions of threats.

**Topo/Abuse** focuses on use of expressions to show abuse of power, anger or harshness of language use.

**Populism** is language approach used to appeal to people who feel that the speaker's concerns are disregarded by the higher authorities.

**Euphemism** is a discourse device which is used to avoid negative impression. The speaker constructs the expressions in less-offensive to replace blunt or vulgar language.

**Counterfeit** is an expression of deceit by pretenses. This is a claim that is not genuine. The speakers intentionally utter the statement of counterfeit to please the hearers.

**Consensus** is an expressive form of agreement to favour in-group and oppose outgroup. It is in-group unification against out-group.

**Dramatisation** is a tool for exaggeration of facts for in-group favour. Members of in-group exaggerate a fact to paint members of outgroup in black on an issue.

**Metaphor** is a figurative language in which a speaker uses a word or phrase denoting an object in place of another. It is used to suggest a likeness or analogy between the two objects.

**Disclaimer** is an utterance made by the speaker to repudiate a claim. The speaker disowns or renounces an uttered statement in circulation against the in-group or out-group.

**Comparison** is a discursive strategy used to compare attitude or interest of interactants. Either in-group or out-group does the comparison for effect of self-glorification or condemnation of the out-group.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Frequency Occurrence of Discursive Strategy in the Data Source

Discursive Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Victimisation	25	23
Abuse	18	16
Populism	15	13
Euphemism	13	12
Counterfeit	11	10
Consensus	10	9
Dramatisation	8	7
Metaphor	7	6
Disclaimer	4	3
Comparison	2	1
Total	113	100

Victimisation

The Nigerian newspapers exhibit use of victimisation by ASUU and FGN as discursive strategy. The discursive strategy allots negative representations to ASUU and FGN. The sampled data, as shown on tablet

1, depict 23 per cent of victimisation use, the highest frequency in the list of the discursive strategy. Victimisation is the commonest discursive strategy ASUU and FGN employ to convey information to each other. Let us consider Table 2.

Table 2: Victimisation Discourse

Data Code	Newspaper	Victimisation Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
VIC1	The Nation, June 27,2024; pg.15	It (ASUU) issued a three-week ultimatum to the federal government over outstanding demands	Threatener	
VIC2	Punch, June 27, 2024; pg2	Members of ASUU... warned of impending strike if government refused to act on agreement signed with the union.	Threatener	Renegade
VIC3	The Guardian, June 26,2024;pg30	... ensure prompt negotiation to avert strike, ASUU tells FG	Threatener	Filibuster
VIC4	The Nation, June 27,pg 15	Dr Michael Ojo demanded full payment of entitlements of ASUU members, saying the no work no pay policy introduced by government was a breach of International Labour Law	Threatener	Oppressor

In the Table 2 above, VIC1, VIC2, VIC3 and VIC4 are signifiers of threats by ASUU to withdraw service and cease the industrial harmony existing between ASUU and FGN, indicating victimisation. The initiator of the threats is the union of the lecturers while the receiver is the FGN on a conflict bothering on outstanding demands of the union. VIC1 "ASUU issued a three-week ultimatum to the federal government" serves as a threat; VIC2 "... members of ASUU warned of impending strike if government refused..." also indicates threat; VIC3 "... ensure prompt negotiation to avert strike..." is a threat; and, VIC4 "Dr Michael Ojo demanded full payment of entitlements of ASUU..." is a threat. The excerpts, indicating use of threats, are therefore a victimisation. This allots discourse representations to ASUU as threatener (The Nation, The

Guardian, and Punch) while the discursive strategy allots discourse representations to FGN in the same context as renegade for "refusing to act on agreement signed with the union" (Punch), filibuster for not ensuring "prompt negotiation..." (The Guardian), and oppressor for introducing "no work no pay policy" (The Nation).

Topo/Abuse

The Nigerian newspapers rank use of topo otherwise known as abuse the second discursive strategy explored by ASUU and FGN to address each other over their industrial conflicts. Abuse, on the table of frequency occurrence of discursive strategy, is scored 16 per cent. ASUU and FGN deploy verbal abuse and power abuse against each other. Let us consider Table 3.

**Table 3: Topo/Abuse Discourse**

Data Code	Newspaper	Topo/Abuse Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
TOP1	The Nation, June 27,2024;pg 15	The union decried the federal government's insensitivity to its long standing demands	Sufferer	Abandoner
TOP2	Leadership, June 20,2024; pg3	Federal Government had embarked on unauthorized dissolution of Governing Councils in Universities	Advocate	Breacher
TOP3	Vanguard, June 28,2024;pg9	Osodeke has slammed government for establishing universities it cannot fund	Slammer	Proliferator
TOP4	The Nation, June 27,2024;pg15	The implementation of IPPIS denied lecturers due allowances and affected sabbatical arrangement.	Sufferer	Oppressor

Table 3 shows verbal abuse and power abuse. TOP1 indicates ASUU exploring verbal abuse against FGN "... federal government's insensitivity". The nominal phrase "government's insensitivity" denotatively implies to lack of feelings or concerns for others. The verbal abuse ridicules, humiliates and insults the personality of the government. TOP3 is another marker of verbal abuse. In "Osodeke slammed the government", "slammed" means "criticized" which is targeted at ridiculing the government in the context. TOP2 signifies use of power abuse, "Federal Government embarked on unauthorised dissolution of Governing Councils of Universities". "Unauthorised dissolution" is unjust use of power and it is power abuse which FGN exercises against ASUU. TOP4 also indicates power abuse. FGN abuses power on ground of "implementation of IPPIS" which "denied lecturers

due allowances and affected sabbatical arrangement". Using Topo/Abuse as the discursive strategy, ASUU is represented as sufferer (The Nation), advocate (Leadership), slammer (Vanguard), while FGN is represented as abandoner (The Nation), breacher (Leadership), proliferator (Vanguard), and oppressor (The Nation).

#### Populism

Populism is in use in Nigerian newspapers reports as a discursive strategy by both ASUU and FGN. They explore the discursive strategy to de-emphasise each other's good things but emphasise their good deeds. So, ASUU uses populism to communicate to the in-group that FGN disregards its concerns viz-a-viz the FGN. Let us consider Table 4.

**Table 4: Populism Discourse**

Data Code	Newspaper	Populism Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
POP 1	Punch, June 14,2024;pg 14	Federal Government has not serviced a memorandum of understanding it signed with ASUU	Advocate	Renegade
POP2	Vanguard, June 26,2024;pg10	Govern us, not oppress us	Advocate	Oppressor
POP3	The Nation, June 27,2024;pg4	We have discussed... lots of the issues are inherited	Troublesome	Discussant
POP4	Punch, Jun 27,2024;pg2	The Government moved to avert another round of strikes by university teachers	Striker	Altruist

The Table 4 indicates populism. ASUU justifies its grievances against the government while FGN acts as innocent. POP1 "Federal Government has not serviced a memorandum of understanding it signed..." de-emphasises the good deeds of FGN, justifying the grievance of ASUU. POP2, "govern us, not oppress us" gives impression of ASUU being oppressed by FGN, emphasising bad things of FGN as oppressor. In contrary, FGN deploys populism to convey information to in-group and emphasise bad things of ASUU. POP1 "...lots of the issues are inherited" portrays ASUU as troublesome. POP2 "... the government move to avert another round of strikes by university teachers" allots

self-glorification to FGN and emphasise bad things of ASUU as incessant striker, "... another round of strike by university teachers". Populism as discursive strategy represents ASUU as advocate fighting the cause of standard education (Punch), advocate of democratic government (Vanguard), troublesome for fighting on past issues (The Nation), and striker for proposing another round of strike (Punch). FGN is represented as renegade (Punch), oppressor (Vanguard), discussant (The Nation), altruist (Punch).

## Euphemism

Nigerian print media project use of euphemism in reporting messages of impasse between ASUU and FGN. Euphemism, as discursive strategy, shown on tablet 1, scores 12 percent and emerges the fourth in the ranking list. ASUU and the FGN use euphemism to

avoid vulgar languages sometimes against each other. Their expressions are less-offensive. However, with a close look, members of outgroup can easily take an offence in each other's expressions. Let us consider table 5.

**Table 5: Euphemism Discourse**

Data Code	Newspaper	Euphemism Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
EUP1	Leadership, June 20,2024;pg3.	ASUU observed that the present administration deliberately ignored the leadership of the union	Observer	Abandoner
EUP2	The Nation, June 28,2024;pg6	Wale Babalakin Committee in 2017 failed to conclude its agreement...		Failure
EUP3	Punch, June 14,2024 pg28	The quality of graduates churned out by universities leaves much to be desired	Teachers of unemployable graduates	
EUP4	The Nation, June 27,2024;pg 2	...some information is beyond the scope of the ministry...	Greed	

EUP1 epitomises euphemism by ASUU. The clause "... the present administration deliberately ignored the leadership of the union" can be expressed in an offensive manner to encode the same message. EUP2, "...Wale Babalakin Committee in 2017 failed..." means the government failed. The message encoder, ASUU may choose to direct the failure at the government which causes Babalakin Committee to fail. FGN also uses euphemism to encode that university lecturers produce unemployable graduates. EUP3, "... the quality of graduates churned out by the universities leaves much to be desired" is an euphemism. The speaker does not direct it at ASUU whose contribution is higher in churning out the graduates. Rather, universities are used to replace lecturers. EUP4, "...some information is beyond the

scope of the ministry..." is an epitome of euphemism which connotes "lecturers' request are infeasible" because they are huger than the ministry's capacity. ASUU and the FGN use cognition in the construction of some expressions which results in use of euphemism.

## Counterfeit

Counterfeit as discursive strategy is projected in Nigerian newspaper reports on ASUU-FGN impasse. On tablet 1, it is ranked number 5 with 10 percent of the tested discursive strategies. The socio-cognitive language element is explored by the FGN, the higher authority over ASUU, to fake, to deceive, and to emphasise bad deeds (things) of ASUU. The instances are on Table 6.

**Table 6: Counterfeit Discourse**

Data Code	Newspaper	Counterfeit Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
COU1	The Nation, June 27,2024; pg15	President Bola Tinubu had reiterated the commitment to prioritising education		Promiser
COU2	The Guardian, June 28,2024;pg7	The federal government has promised to fulfill demands by ASUU		Promiser
COU3	Punch, June 27,2024;pg2	Federal Government to avert strikes by university teachers		Promiser

COU1 indicates exploration of counterfeit with the clause "... Tinubu had reiterated the commitment to prioritising education". "... commitment to prioritising..." makes promise. COU2 signifies promise of government to "... fulfill demands by ASUU". COU3 also shows making a promise, "... Government to avert strikes...". All the identified expressions turn to be fake, deceit, and empty promise when government does not act towards the fulfillment. Having embarked on industrial disharmony, ASUU is condemned by the public which reads/hears about the made promises. Therefore, bad deeds (things) of ASUU are emphasised. Counterfeit

represents the FGN as fake promiser (The Nation, The Guardian, The Punch).

## Consensus

ASUU reaches consensus with members to act. The FGN agrees with machineries of government for actions. Also, ASUU and FGN agree with each other on some issues, forming consensus, discursive strategy. The use of the discursive strategy is scored on table 1, and is listed number 6 with 9 percent. Table 7 shows use of consensus in Nigerian newspapers for discourse representations of ASUU and FGN.

**Table 7: Consensus Discourse**

Data Code	Newspaper	Consensus Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
CON1	Leadership, June 20,2024;pg3	We resolved to hold press conference	Warner	Oppressor
CON2	The Guardian, June 28,2024;pg7	Mamman noted that both parties have agreed to reconvene on a later date...	Peacemaker	Peacemaker
CON 3	Punch, June 27,2024;pg2	Mamman had volunteered to follow up on what had been agreed on (sic)		Altruist

CON1 uses "resolved" a predicate indicating agreement within members of ASUU. CON2 uses "... have agreed..." verbal group to show consensus between ASUU and FGN while CON3 uses "...had volunteered..." another verbal group to signify consensus reached between ASUU and the FGN. The explored verbal groups marking consensus represent ASUU in the context as warner (Leadership), and peacemaker (The Guardian). The FGN is represented as oppressor (Leadership), peacemaker (The Guardian), and altruist (Punch).

### Dramatisation

ASUU and FGN deploy dramatisation as discursive strategy. They take turns to exaggerate issues and paint members of outgroup in black. The cycle of ideological polarisation of "us-them" is explored. ASUU takes turns to emphasise bad deeds of FGN and the FGN takes turns to de-emphasise good deeds of ASUU. Scene of drama is created through the media discourse. Let us consider Table 8.

**Table 8: Dramatisation Discourse**

Data Code	Newspaper	Dramatisation Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
DRA1	The Nation, June 27,2024;pg15	Tinubu approved more autonomy to federal universities		Approver
DRA2	The Guardian, June 28,2024;pg7	Osodeke noted that none of the 10 contending issues have been resolved (sic)	Informer	
DRA3	Vanguard, June 26,2024;pg 10.	The ASUU members were seen carrying different placards with inscriptions...	Protester	
DRA4	The Guardian, June 28,2024;pg7	Mamman ensured that the issues were amicably resolved		Resolutionist

DRA1 and DRA2 indicate turn-taking between FGN and ASUU targeted at emphasising the bad deeds of each other. DRA1 "Tinubu approved more autonomy to federal universities" opens floor. The expression emphasises good gesture of government towards request of ASUU and presents FGN to the public approver (The Nation) of ASUU request. Two days later, ASUU takes turn on the same issue with expression in DRA2, "Osodeke noted that none of the 10 contending issues have been resolved (sic). DRA2 logically emphasises bad things of FGN as unfaithful. It represents ASUU as informer (The Guardian). DRA3 creates scene for ASUU for demonstration. DRA4 indicates FGN brainwashing

the effect of the demonstration to present itself as resolutionist (The Guardian). The expression "Mamman ensured that the issues were amicably resolved" emphasises good deeds FGN but de-emphasises ASUU good deeds.

### Metaphor

Metaphor possesses 6 percent of discursive strategies ASUU and FGN use to address each other. Exploring metaphorical strategy, ASUU and FGN are represented negatively. Table 9 indicates use of the metaphor.

**Table 9: Metaphor Discourse**

Data Code	Newspaper	Metaphor Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
MET1	Punch, June 27,2024;pg2	Odiwe said release of four month pending salaries was a Greek gift.	Oppressed	Oppressor
MET2	Punch, June 27,2024;pg2	IPPIS is a scam	Sufferer	Dictator
MET3	The Nation, June 28,2024 pg6.	...all entreaties to solve the issues in contention fell on deaf ears	Sufferer	Oppressor
MET4	Punch, June 14,2024;pg28	...a lot of graduates are half-baked.	Slacker	

MET1 indicates metaphorical use as "release of four month pending salaries" denotes "a Greek gift" which means a gift causing harm to the recipient. By the use of "a Greek gift", FGN is challenged of oppressing ASUU and it is represented as oppressor (Punch) while ASUU is represented as the oppressed (Punch). MET2 metaphorically presents IPPIS as "scam" denoting the rejected payment platform of university workers as fraud. ASUU suffers the fraud by IPPIS. It is therefore represented as sufferer (Punch) while FGN is represented as dictator (Punch). MET3 metaphorically presents FGN as "deaf ears" denoting "not hearing/listening to cries of ASUU". FGN is therefore represented as oppressor (Punch) and ASUU as the

oppressed (Punch). MET4 presents "graduates" as "half-baked" denoting not well trained by ASUU. The figurative language represents ASUU as slacker (Punch).

**Disclaimer**

In Nigerian newspapers, ASUU and FGN disclaim some statements said to emphasise bad deeds of each other. ASUU is mostly used to disclaimer as its discursive strategy of either debunking utterances wrongly credited to it or false statements of the FGN over impasse between the two parties. Use of disclaimer is scored 3 percent on tablet 1. Table 10 indicates the disclaimer use.

**Table 10: Disclaimer Discourse**

Data Code	Newspaper	Disclaimer Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
DIS1	Punch, June 27,2024;pg2	Osodeke said "we have not decided on anything yet but we only created committee to look into our demands	Advocate	Peacemaker
DIS2	The Nation, June 28,2024;pg6	FGN stipulated that the agreement would be reviewed every three years. However, the union has been without a re-negotiated agreement for 15 years	Sufferer	Renegade
DIS3	The Guardian, June 28,2024;pg7	Osodeke said "this is the first meeting between ASUU and FGN. He, however, said that none of the issues have been resolved."	The oppressed	Oppressor
DIS4	The Punch, June 27,2024;pg2	We've had a very good meeting and a very productive one.	Liar	Solutionist

DIS1 indicates disclaimer explored by ASUU to de-emphasise FGN and establish that nothing is yet decided even though meeting is held. Call for meeting presents FGN as peacemaker (Punch), and ASUU as advocate (Punch) for demanding for better university system. DIS2 signifies disclaimer using "however", language element for contrast to emphasise bad deed of FGN and present it as renegade (The Nation) for not implementing its signed agreement. ASUU is represented as sufferer (The Nation) because it suffers effect of FGN's dishonour of the agreement. DIS3 uses "however" in the second clause to contrast the positivity in the first clause. The clause "...none of the issues have been resolved" portrays FGN as oppressor and ASUU as

the oppressed (The Guardian). DIS4 signifies disclaimer to emphasise bad things of ASUU by letting the public aware of the meeting outcome as productive. FGN is thereby represented as solutionist and ASUU as liar (The Punch).

**Comparison**

Reports of news items for comparison are observed in the print media on ASUU-FGN impasse. Comparison is the least with 1 percent on the Table 1. Table 11 shows use of comparison as discursive strategy in reporting ASUU-FGN impasse in Nigerian newspapers.

**Table 11: Comparison Discourse**

Data Code	Newspaper	Comparison Discourse	Representation of ASUU	Representation of FGN
COM1	The Nation, June 27,2024;pg15	ASUU-UNILORIN described President Tinubu led-administration as the worst in anti-labour policies	Observer	Dictator
COM2	The Nation, June 27,2024;pg15	Tinubu increased 2024 budget allocations for education when compared sector's allocation in the previous year.		Comparativist

COM1 explores superlative "...worst..." to make comparison between Tinubu-led administration and other previous administrations in Nigeria. The clause

represents ASUU as observer and FGN as dictator (The Nation). COM2 indicates comparison using the word



"compared". The expression represents FGN as comparativist (The Nation).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study identified ten discursive strategies which the Nigerian newspapers explored for discourse representations of ASUU-FGN. The research showed the hierarchical percentage of the discursive strategies and found out that victimisation and abuse were ranked highest. This implied that ASUU and FGN victimised and abused each other. The study concluded that the parties should opt for amicable settlement of their differences to deter the news consumers from allotting negative representations to their personalities. The research recommended that further studies be conducted on blame-praise frame of ASUU-FGN impasse in Nigerian newspapers.

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