

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *CHANGE IS NOT EASY* AS POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Words are used in various forms and styles as political language for the achievement of a specific objective in political communication. The President Jonathan's Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement, known as Change is not easy, is the political television commercial analysed, to understand how "change" in other countries in the world is associated with "transformation" in Nigeria, for the generation of voter support. The critical dialectical method used, found that the commercial is an exercise in glittering generalities, as propaganda in political communication. The proposition of "change" as "transformation" was a straw man's logical fallacy and that the imported comparison of political performance by notable icons globally, has no direct correlation with transformation promised Nigerians, as bait for voter support and endorsement. It means that selected artistic elements in political advertisements must be relevant, through used political language, in the realisation of set objective. It shows that message acceptance and believability are essential in political communication.*

KEYWORDS: Television Commercial, Change, Transformation, Political Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Political language use in political advertising is designed to achieve a specific objective in political communication. Words are used to portray a particular image, through created meaning, which generates action as response from the receiver. It implies that the selected words must convey the intended meaning to the target audience, where the expected action is to originate. This reason explains why persuaders use the most moving examples to substantiate the meaning to be understood by the message consumer.

The *President Jonathan's Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement*, also known as *Change is not easy*, is a political television commercial, used by the Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria, TAN, to affect voter appeal in favour of Goodluck Jonathan. The commercial used examples from various continent of the world to explain how "change" in those countries explain "transformation" in Nigeria. It is the use of foreign political icons to persuade voter support in Nigeria that has excited an analytical interest in the presented commercial.

This study, therefore, provides a critical analysis of "transformation," as presented in the political advertisement. It aims to determine if used political situations elsewhere can create the believability needed to give Goodluck Jonathan, the political acceptance and advantage above opponents in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. It is the ability to understand the political undercurrent, associated with "transformation" as presented that the political camouflage in word use as political language would then unravel why *Change is not easy*, was used as a persuasive gambit in political communication, within the Nigerian situation.

Political Advertising in Nigeria's Situation

In the 1950s, Rosser Reeves espoused an argument that the application of commercial advertising to the sale of a product equally applies to the sale of a political candidate. The idea being that where commercial spots sell a product, they could also sell a political candidate (McNair, 2007). Reeves, who pioneered the concept of Unique Selling Point (USP), drew on the operations and appeals of promotion attributes of a product or service to also create a favorable image of a political candidate and lead to a desirable voting action.

By 1952 the tenor of political campaigns changed with the advent and supremacy of television and applications of Reeve's concept of commercial advertising to political campaigns. With the U.S presidential election of 1952, the Dwight Eisenhower's Commercial, *Eisenhower Answers America* as political advertisement, began the evolution of television political advertising campaigns. The advertising agency of Barton, Dustin and Osborne in the US became the first to design electoral campaign commercials for a political candidate in a presidential election. Earlier in the proceeding decades, presidential candidates neither campaigned extensively nor broadly propagated their policies and programmes across all the states, beside pockets of efforts through leaders, associates, families and others, within given constituencies.

In Nigeria, election campaign advertising began after independence in 1960. Prior to independence, electoral activities were basically organized and executed by the colonial administration with clear interests and control. For instance, elections were organized into legislative and municipal councils, wherein no deliberate advert strategies were employed to sell the political candidates, their programmes or policies. However, there were political rallies and speeches, news and articles in the print media.

In 1963, the Action Group (AG), led by Obafemi Awolowo, introduced innovations in electioneering campaigns. The party employed helicopters for skywriting, flying of pamphlets and AG promotional materials to the electorate across Nigeria. In 1979, the Nigerian Advance Party (NAP) employed a British agency to organize and promote its election campaigns. In 1983, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) enlisted the services of UK-based advert agency, Saatchi and Saatchi, to organize and run its election campaign. In 1990, political advertising campaign had been entrenched as thriving in Nigeria. By 1993, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), led by Moshood Abiola, a media mogul, had employed extensive political advertising. So also did subsequent elections. According to Okwechime (2010):

During the 2007 presidential election campaigns in Nigeria, political advertisements in newspapers provided new and convincing information about the candidates, facilitated voters' understanding of the issues canvassed, helped to increase the approval rating of favored candidates, significantly reinforced their decision to vote for particular candidates but failed to promote shifts in their voting pattern.

President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was the sole presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. In line with the preponderance of political campaign advertising in all media of mass communication and specifically in the broadcast media of television, the presidential candidate, his supporters and sponsors, spearheaded a plethora of election campaign spots on television, with the aim of persuading the Nigerian electorate for his re-election. One of the president's electoral

campaign advertisements was that sponsored by a group- the Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria (TAN). TAN is a campaign organization cum non-governmental organization.

The advertisement under study, *change is not easy*, is a 120-second political advert with the very objective of creating a positive association between Goodluck Jonathan and other international heroes or global icons, referenced in the television commercial. It is the tie between “change” as effected by the political celebrities in their different countries and associated with “transformation”, as presented from the Nigerian situation that excited this critical analysis interest as an academic exercise. The study becomes relevant globally, in showing how political persuasion uses ideas from various countries, in order to elicit positive voter support for a specified candidate at election. It provides an invaluable literature in political communication and generates debate on the use of political language in political advertising.

Statement of Problem

How to present the vision of a presidential candidate in comparative terms, so that performance excellence elsewhere can easily be used as an elixir for positive political gains in a specified nation-state is a problem in political communication. It is the quest to posture a candidate’s competence in political performance for national good that evolves strategies often evident in political advertisements, like *Change is not easy*. It becomes necessary to understand why the use of political performance in other countries of world by different icons is localized, to enhance the electoral fortunes of a presented candidate in an election. The March 28, 2015 presidential election campaigns in Nigeria, provides the platform for understanding the implications of “transformation” as a political slogan and language in the achievement of electoral success, using that same communication posturing in other nation-states globally.

The use of *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* (JGLECA), proposed a vision of national transformation, as bait for positive electoral gains. The political television commercial’s strategy of presenting renowned political celebrities who had pioneered transformation in their respective countries, as similar to the efforts of Goodluck Jonathan in Nigeria, was designed to elicit positive voter action at the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. The need arises as to determine if any correlation exists between the various visions of transformation from the perspectives of the used icons in the television commercial and the socio-economic scenario in Nigeria that would be capable of achieving the desired electoral objective.

Study Objective

The use and application of political language was evident in the persuasion of voters within the realm of the campaign advertisement, as presented to the Nigerian electorate. The political television commercial was set to create and generate meaning, required for voter support. *Change is not easy* was, used as a political expression of how “transformation” as “change”, happened in other countries of the world with massive political endorsements. The study, therefore, set two analysable bases, as goals and used them for the evaluation of the commercial’s process message (Owuamalam, 2007) and style of persuasion (Borchers, 2000), in the realisation of the expected political objective, as envisaged by the political communication. The two specifically set objectives, desired to guide the study were as follows:

1. To examine the validity of comparisons in *Change is not easy*, using the accomplishments of political celebrities in other countries, in persuading electoral success within the Nigerian situation.
2. To establish if any relationship exist between “change” in the political environments of the referenced political icons in the television commercial and “transformation” in the Nigerian context.

Theoretical Underpinning

According to Graber (1981, p.195), “politics is largely a word game”. It sets public agenda through a specific media agenda for the generation of an expected action (McCombs 1981, p.127). It is the desired political action that has led to a created and used word like “transformation” which seeks to elicit the generation of a specific voter support from the electorate, within the context of political communication. It means therefore that the choice of “transformation,” as synonymous with “change”, and substantiated by the use of political performance in other countries of the world, through presented political celebrities, was designed to give meaning to those words, for a better understanding, within the Nigerian political situation. The assumption here is that the message as conveyed reduces the expressed meaning of used words to “the number of alternative possibilities” (Schramm, 1974, p.13), in the political situation, as canvassed by the television commercial under study.

The subject of “transformation” falls into the garb of deliberative discourse (Osuafor 2003, p.13), since the message source in *Change is not easy*, tried to persuade the electorate to support a specific proposal. It had to advance evidence from other countries to show that transformation had worked elsewhere. It is hortative and advisory (Bitzer, 1981, p.37), since it sought to show what the electorate stands to gain if the presented candidate is voted into office in the March 28, 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. It is this advise in the futuristic sense that was expected to facilitate positive voter action from the Nigerian electorate, in an election, yet to come.

There is a congruency in asserting that *Change is not easy* is a rhetorical exercise in political communication. The source presented “transformation” as a desirable “change”, in order to secure political support for Goodluck Jonathan from the electorate in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. Perelman (1969) agrees with this theoretical perspective since he believes that the aim of rhetoric is to secure “the persuasion and conviction” of the political audience in that election. Again, Bitzer (1981, p.227) confirms that “rhetoric is at work whenever a writer or speaker seeks’ through argument to secure the assent of others to theses he advances.” It is the advancement of “transformation” as a political rhetoric that deserves a critical analysis, moreso, when presented from the template of other political constituencies outside Nigeria, like in the presented political advertisement under study.

An empirical evidence exists in the use of foreign political icons, as political advertisement tactics for wooing voters support in Nigeria presidential campaigns. For instance, Owuamalam (2012) reviewed the “transmutation” of former military leaders in different countries of the world to civilian presidents in their respective countries, as used by General Sanni Abacha in the political television commercial titled, *who the cap fits*. It is the similarity between “transmutation” and “transformation” as political language for “change” that makes the study relevant for empirical review.

The journal article critically analyzed how General Charles DeGualle and General Napoleon of France, Winston Churchill of Britain and Dwight Eisenhower of the United States of America were transmuted from military icons to civilian presidents. The change in their costumes represented a “transformation” from military to civil leadership in their various advanced western democracies. Also, Jerry Rawlings of Ghana was shown to have “changed from a smart air force uniform to a colourful kente costume of the ordinary Ghananian, as a civilian president”. Finally, General Sanni Abacha of Nigeria was thereafter, shown “changing from his trade-mark military attire, to a flamboyant ‘agbada’ with a matching traditional cap, reminiscent of a typical Nigerian politician”. The questions were then put to the electorate “what is common to all these great patriots? Must Nigeria be an exception? (p.137).

The study concluded that the “unscientific” proof of what work elsewhere should also work in Nigeria, is a fallacy in logical and intellectual reasoning. The political television commercial “tries to distort the actual political situation requiring participatory democracy by obviating the viewers’ opportunity to judge as individuals”. The persuasive communication strategy is akin in concept to the currently studied political advertisement, used by Goodluck Jonathan in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

In examining the concept of political campaign advertising as a communication process with ideological subtexts and representations of images imbued with significant meanings, the theory of Critical discourse analysis becomes relevant. The theory, here, elucidates the imagery and connotations conveyed in the *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* with the message. Ezeifeke (2010) asserts that critical theories in general and critical discourse analysis in particular are:

guide to human action, they are aimed at producing both enlightenment and emancipation. They aim at making agents aware of hidden coercion and putting them in a situation where they can determine their true interests. They not only seek to describe and explain but also root out a peculiar kind of delusion.

At the roots of politics is power. This is power that is freely ceded in a democracy to elected representative in a state system, which then guarantees individual freedoms, protection of life and property, social justice and the pursuit of happiness. This root of politics also reflects a social or political contract, where according to the online resource Wikipedia (2015), individuals have consented, either explicitly or tacitly to surrender some of their freedoms and submit to the authority of the ruler or magistrate (or to the decision of a majority), in exchange for the protection of their remaining rights.

Electoral promises are the staple of political campaigns and adverts. They are meant to give the electorate a hope of strong economy, excellent infrastructure and unequalled political leadership, as reminiscent of “transformation,” used in denoting “change”, within the Nigerian political environment. These electoral promises and choice of advertisement style are couched as an audio-visual experience. In the political advert on television, titled *Change is not easy*, promises are made, real and imagined, performance vouchsafed, glorifying associations created and a rosy future proposed under the roof of the candidate proclaimed, which is Goodluck Jonathan, in the studied television commercial.

Behind these political communications are power relations. Critical discourse analysis as applied in this study entails an evaluation of the production and contents of the political advert and its significance in the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, the elite and the masses, the powerful and the ordinary, between those who control the instruments of coercion and communication and those force-fed dominant images of castles in the air. Max Horkimeir, cited in Ezeifeke (2010), noted that ‘the role of the critical theorist is that of articulating and helping to develop a latent class consciousness. The tasks of critical theory are to assist in remembering a past that was in danger of being forgotten, to struggle for emancipation, to clarify reasons for a struggle and to define the nature of critical thinking itself.

The thesis posited by the critical discourse analytical theory is that presented arguments would persuade an emotional attachment to used persuasive gambits, in eliciting the desired political objective of the television commercial. It is the association of “change”, effected by the projected political icons in other countries that are expected to glorify the presented presidential candidate in Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan, as comparable to those celebrities who have positively impacted on their nation-states. The theory, therefore, used the rhetorical evidence to explain why the Nigerian electorate should vote for someone whose objective is to “transform” the country for the benefit of all.

Conceptual Discussion

Political advertising is a planned communication, using various creative strategies as appeals, which provide information, arouse participation, create preferences and motivate voting action in a desired way. Political advertising has political power as its ultimate aim. It uses persuasive arguments presented in the most appropriate format and style in influencing voter behaviour.

Democracy as a form of government thrives through communication of electoral processes. Political campaign is a key aspect of the electoral process which takes several forms, including but not limited to lobbying, personal contacts, political rallies and speeches, barnstorming, or opinion leadership. Hornby (2005) sees campaign itself as ‘a series of planned activities that are intended to achieve a particular social, commercial or political aim’, while advertisements aim to tell the public about a product or service, in order to encourage people to buy or use it. In essence, political advertising seeks to proclaim or make known a political candidate and persuade voters to eventually choose him on election day, using any of the mass communication channel – print or electronic media [television, radio, newspapers, magazine, the Interest, social media]. According to Okwechime (2010, p.188):

Political advertising can be seen as an important means of informing the electorate about political candidates and what they are offering their constituency in policy terms while also being a positioning technique to show how one politician is different from another, directing voters to political ideals and away from avoidable pitfalls.

The President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement follows the tradition of modern television advertising. An extensive application of creative strategies and appeals to logical and emotions was used to connect the candidate to promises of ideals, achieved by international heroes and the conclusion that he would achieve same if given the chance. The advert positioned President Jonathan in the minds of the electorate as a transformer, ready to do more and a candidate with a large supporters’ base, despite pockets of opposition.

In Nigeria, what is the outlook for “change” and “transformation”? Is there a positive correlation between the various visions of “transformation” and socio-economic experience of the citizens? Ezeifeke (2012, p.263) opines:

critical political languages and speeches are ostensibly persuasive but inherently self-glorifying, presenting the speakers as good leaders who were sent by the Almighty Himself to redeem the people from ‘chaos’, ‘deterioration’, ‘insecurity,’ ‘corruption’, and lead them to better conditions and that ‘the language is aimed at the manufacture of consent (hegemony), while dangling the issues which represent the yearnings of the people as bait.

The end aim of *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* is reelection in the 2015 presidential race. However, pursuant to that goal, other immediate and mid-range objectives were set for the campaign advert. Broadly, the TAN-sponsored television commercial, sought to give information about Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, as to enable voters to evaluate him and create preference for him among other contestants.

Furthermore, *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders election Campaign Advertisement* used concept advertising strategy to present and laud the candidate with salient qualities, ideals and facts obtainable in other countries, as issues that should make him acceptable and electable by the electorate. For instance, the PDP 2015 presidential candidate is portrayed as a gentleman democrat, a quiet and humble change agent, a non-violent visionary and a genuine nationalist, desirous of moving Nigeria forward with enviable development strides and maintain continuity in national development, inspite evident travails, confronting his political environment.

Okoro (1998, p.38) noted that the ‘ad message must move the target prospect from the base of ignorance to the affective level, in order to ignite a buying (voting) action’. The *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* employed the principles of commercial advertising to sell the candidacy of President Jonathan who was positioned as the brand for transformation. Belch & Belch (2001, p.52) say that positioning relates to the image of the product or brand, relative to competing products or brand: “the image that comes to mind and the attributes consumers perceive as related to it”.

Also, Okigbo (1992, p.141) pointed that positioning means that the advertisers examine the product to determine just “what it is offering, to what kind of people and through what kind of image”. In this case, Jonathan was positioned as another Ghandi, another Lee Kuan Yew, another Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama. The planners and sponsors the *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* had used glittering generalities, as the propaganda device (Agbanu, 2014) expected to persuade voter support for continuity in “transformation”. The essence was to structure a political situation for the electorate, so as to influence voters to believe, feel and act in a particular political manner (Roberts, 1974).

Synopsis of TV Commercial

A group of campaign strategists and supporter of the PDP presidential candidate, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan sponsored a 120 second political advisement on television nationwide as a vote-capturing strategy in the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria. This commercial depicted the candidate in the mould of such heroes and change agents, like Ghandi, Lee Kuan Yew, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama. The connection was made that same as these leaders did in their various countries, Jonathan is also doing same

currently in Nigeria. These leaders were the faces of change and uncommon transformation in their countries and the incumbent president of Nigeria is towing similar revolutionary path. Are these parallels justified to be used in political advertising? What basis exists for the assumption that the change wrought by these leaders in their societies and time are applicable in the Nigerian context? Put starkly, is candidate Jonathan transforming Nigeria in the garb of the presented political icons? This study considers the nexus between the socio-economic, infrastructural and political heights achieved by the five historic figures of the *President Jonathan's Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* (JGLECA). It is the style used in the vision of "transformation" in Nigeria, as presented in the TAN campaign advertisement that is the subject of this critical analysis.

Raised issues in the TV-Commercial

The historic figures referred to in the political commercial were Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi of India, Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, Martin Luther King Jr. of USA, Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Barrack Obama of USA. One common dominator among these icons was to "**Change**" the experience, the attitudes and actions within their respective environments. It is "change" in the political and social security systems, change in infrastructure and social amenities, change in the economic dynamics of the citizenry and change in the colour of the nations' international relations that made their choice unique, as change agents. For the presidential candidate of the PDP, these changes were encapsulated in the presidential slogan of "**transformation agenda**" of the Goodluck administration. It was the desire to position the 2015 presidential election candidate and incumbent President of Nigeria with similar political advancements in other countries that resulted in what is here referred to as *President Jonathan's Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* (JGLECA). The presented television commercial emphasizes that *Change is not easy*.

The sponsors took prime spots on various television stations including NTA and AIT among others, to address the electorate as television audience. The voice over was of a deep English male. The transition devices were mixed but mainly used fades. The picture colour was monochromatic for the historic figures in vertical boxes and coloured for President Goodluck Jonathan in chosen scenes. A clean and clear mix of appealing video and a supplementing audio element combined to create the political advertisement for the campaign. The advert strategy was to re-introduce the candidate while crafting a positive image for him, and linking him to the accomplishment of the mentioned heroes.

However, the *President Jonathan's Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* (JGLECA) raises some challenges in relation to assumption of transformation within the Nigerian environment and in comparison to the scene changes in the nations and heroes shown in the advertisement. Recall that these leaders in India, Singapore, USA, and South Africa met opposition. As a matter of fact, three of the five icons suffered long jail terms; two were outrightly assassinated while another continues to encounter prejudiced opposition in his quest for new ways. Thus, the political television commercial was hinged on *change is not easy*. This viewpoint is supported by the commentary which ended the commercial when it asserted that "we who are with you are much more than those against you."

ANALYTICAL METHOD

The methodology applied in the study of the 2015 *President Jonathan's Great Leaders election Campaign Advertisement* is the critical dialectical method. Here, the analysis follows the tradition of dialectics: that method of discovering the truth of ideas by discussion and logical argument and by considering ideas that are opposed to each other, (Hornby, 2005). The analysis is also subsumed under the framework of dialectical materialism, the Marxist theory that change results from conflicts because of material needs.

The issues raised in the television commercial are summarily analysed as follows:

Objective 1: *To examine the validity of the comparisons in change is not easy, using the accomplishment of political celebrities in other countries, in persuading electoral success within the Nigerian situation.*

Validity here is defined as the quality of being logical and true, in consonance with observable reality. Evident in the *President Jonathan's Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* is Straw man's logical fallacy. The narrator held that the transformation achieved by Ghandi, Lee Kuan yew and the others, is happening in Nigeria and tied to the statement that 'we who are with you are more than those against you'.

The Straw man's logical fallacy shows that a slightly different or inaccurate form of a proposition (Straw man) has an absurd, unpleasant or ridiculous consequence, and relying on the audience not to notice that the argument does not apply to the original proposition. The original proposition in *President Jonathan's Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* is about "transformation" in all areas of society, especially as exemplified by lee's Singapore.

However, not many Nigerians are aware that Lee Kuan Yew has actually been referred to as a benevolent dictator. He had opposition in his country and was actually accused of nepotism and favouritism among others, of creating an elitist dominant class in leadership and management of Singapore. . Can the same be said of Goodluck Jonathan in Nigeria? Howbeit, he excelled in service and up-building of his country despite opposition.

Therefore, the *President Jonathan's Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* (JGLECA) fell into Straw man's fallacy by presupposing that opposition has a contradictory or constraining effect on transformation. Indeed, transformation benefits from opposition to the extent that it is seen as a motivation to greater accomplishment and eventual acceptance, even by those opposed to the candidate. Probably, it is the concept of "change" in its ulterior perspective that was likened to "transformation" in Nigeria, as a dose for political persuasion and positive voter support for Jonathan.

Objective 2: *To establish if any relationship exist between the "change" in the political environments of the referenced political icons in the television commercial and "transformation" in the Nigerian context.*

India, Singapore, USA, South African are countries in different continents, with different peoples and culture. They have different mix of socio-political systems and contexts. Moreover, what parallels can be drawn between the character, contents and ethical make-up of the historic figures being referenced and that of Jonathan in Nigeria? Is there any evident similarity between Jonathan's and Ghandi's moral and philosophical stature; Lee's nationalistic ethos, leadership skills and pedigree; Luther's civil rights campaign sagacity and

visionary martyrdom; Obama's community organizational skills or galvanizing oratory or even Mandela's resilience in tackling apartheid as a racial cankerworm?

Nigeria is a nation-state of nations. This is in the same way that France, Germany, Italy, Spain and others are, in a mutually accepted European Union or the nations of England, Scotland and Wales in the United Kingdom. In fact, Singapore was part of Malaysia but separated in August 1965. The nations of the Hausa and Fulani, the Igbo, Edo and the Yoruba with other nation were amalgamated over 100 years ago in 1914, on the fundamental basis of exploitative economics. The consequences of this forced and feeble marriage still affects the possibilities of true structural change and transformation, necessary for real progress. Result from the 2015 general elections would likely support these enduring and stultifying ethnic cleavages. National conferences have severally been held but the outcomes are often mired in politics, peculiar to the Nigerian environment. A true sense of patriotism or nationalism seem to lack in the majority. Ethnic sentiments rule in social and economic relations. The federal character concept entrenches philosophies of inequalities hard to fathom, while leaders since independence have only engaged in the rhetoric and politics of 'change' and 'transformation' as mere political catchwords at election times.

In India, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was assassinated on 30th Jan. 1948. He died actively for his legacy. In the United State of American, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on 4th April 1968. He died actively for cruel racism and social liberties he believed in. In South Africa, Nelson Mandela was imprisoned in a former leper colony of Robbin Island from June 12 1964 to February 11 1990, a period of 27 years of his lifetime. He paid with cruel deprivation for the love of his nation. Did the *President Jonathan's Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* take cognizance of these fatalities and their circumstantial significance within the respective environments? Is there a positive correlation between these tough background and the glory shown and claimed in the political advertisement? Perhaps, it is an admission that there is a marked difference between the used icons in their environment and Jonathan in Nigeria that an open confession was made in the political communication that "*Change is not easy*".

Applying Critical discourse analysis, therefore, the relationship between language and messages through various impressions become manifest. Here, the language and imagery are shaped by the existing social and economic structures in Nigeria, while establishing unequal power relations in the forms of social inequities, economic and psycho-social insecurities, political terrorism, environment racism and elitist subversion. How does the 'change' or 'transformation' in the advert translate to mass reality? What objective and debated policies or programmes exist to guarantee real change?

A critical analysis of power transitions in Nigeria from 1960 independence era reveals that there has only been change in the unchanging ruling class and that the real transformation happen among the owners of the means of production, communication and political or military power, in and out of uniform. The actual "transformation" rests in the political elite, while its mirage is experienced by the voters who are wood to keep hoping and voting for an imagined better days ahead. It is this paradox in the political environment in Nigeria that "transformation" becomes apt as a political expression symbolizing "change", as evident in the political commercial.

Critical discourse analysis addresses the prevailing social problems by opposing dominant ideological positions, as observed by Wodak (2005). It chooses the perspective of those who

suffer most and critically analyses those in power, “those who are responsible and those who have the means and the opportunity to solve such problem or improve condition.” The *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* as an expression of a dialectical relationship between ‘what is’ and ‘what ought to be, invites critical discourse on the social and economic conditions of the class structure in Nigeria and “change’ or “transformation” of such structures.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

However, this study argues that *change is not easy*, especially in the specific and contemporary Nigerian environment. Reasons for this position were given, based on the outcome of analysis, using the dialectical method. It shows that the proposition of transformation despite opposition, was a Straw man’s logical fallacy; that the slogan of ‘change’ or ‘transformation’ branded in the political advertisement for presidential elections is an isolation in content and context, unlike in the ‘change’ experienced through the presented political icons from other countries.

The environment for ‘change’ or ‘transformation’, both in the individual candidates in Nigeria and societies of the admired countries are different. The references in their contextual considerations, therefore, have no significant action to justify the desired political action from the Nigerian electorate at the 2015 presidential election, at least from a logical perspective. It is a play on voter emotion, designed to persuade emulation as the trump for a desired political advantage for Goodluck Jonathan, at the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

SUMMARY

In the words of Calhoun (1850), “the interval between the decay of the old and the formation and the establishment of the new, constitutes a period of transition which must always necessarily be one of uncertainty, confusion, error and wild and fierce fanaticism”. Political campaign advertisements seek to bring change. A change in attitude and a subsequent voting action. The *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* sought to gain favourable image through comparison with leadership heroes and their accomplishment in Singapore, India USA and South African.

The *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* projects the image of a benevolent and accomplishing leader in the mould of admired historic change agents. Goodluck Jonathan’s *change is not easy* provides a gambit for political persuasion in creating the urge that deserves affirmation and confirmation for continuation in office.

CONCLUSION

The *President Jonathan’s Great Leaders Election Campaign Advertisement* has only served in communicating to the discerning and critical theorists, the internal contradictions in the Nigerian society, creating dichotomy between reality and utopia of the powerful class, seeking no change in the power *status quo*. As Nzimiro (1992) averred, ‘the history of human civilization shows clearly that class conflict is an inherent characteristic of human societies. Whereas in the past this conflict benefited from the disproportionate ownership of land and

capital, today it is basically expressed in the control of state apparatus and the mass MEDIA'. It is probably the yawning gap between the haves and have-nots that "transformation" becomes an admirable synonym for "change", as political language in political communication. Perhaps, this understanding advised the production of *Change is not easy* as political television commercial.

The Nigerian citizens and electorate yearn for availability of the basic necessities of life. The political advert campaign strategist understands this and therefore, crafts appeals to mitigate these needs, through advertising and positioning of the candidate, in the name "transformation" or "change".

However, real transformation and change, as achieved by the referenced historic figures – Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi of India, Lee Juan Yew of Singapore, Martin Luther King Jr. of USA, Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Barack Obama of USA, is not easy. It means more than the make-belief, presented as a theatrical experience on television, to the unsuspecting voter, for political support. It is the teras in reasoned political climes, with reference to the performance theme, time and environment that flattens the correlation of projected experience, as congruent to the presented political scenarios.

Mazrui (1975) acknowledged that 'African politicians are mere actors in a political theatre contrived by them' and 'that African politics is synonymous with dramatic arts where reality is in eternal conflict with make-belief'. This agrees with Ezeifeka's (2010) adoption of Wodak's historical approach to submit that these political advertisements, represent a counterfeit of what exists in reality. They, are, therefore not true to the Nigerian situation.

Implication for Research and Practice

The use of glittering generalities in political advertising is a veritable persuasive strategy for voter support and endorsement. It relishes in the emotional plane and transforms a psychological appeal to irrational considerations from unsuspecting message consumers, not initiated in understanding the undercurrent, as applicable in political communication. It must, therefore, be realized that the essence of political advertising is to use the most moving examples to harass the sensibilities of the message consumers and persuade an action, in line with a pre-determined political objective. It means that political language to be used for political expression must be apt in accomplishing the desired objective. This is a task which research should be able to accomplish for the use of persuaders and propagandists, in their creative artistic contraptions, presented as political television commercials. It is only when used artistic elements strike the deserving chord in the belief of the message consumer that the desired objective is most likely to be achieved.

Further Study

This critical analysis has raised the issue of how glittering generalities is expected to translate to voter support for a candidate at a presidential election. It is an exercise in the qualitative format. A quantitative study is, therefore, recommended to ascertain if the importation of successful political, icons lend credence to transformation in the Nigerian situation, as to be translated to voter action. Such a study would extol how style of presentation interacts with the message consumer, in order to generate the desired meaning, expected to hit the bull's eye in political election campaigns.

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