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The generic structure of presentations in quasi-judicial public hearings on the FCT Administration in Nigeria in 2008

Abstract. This paper examines the generic structure of the presentation of testimonies by witnesses in the 2008 quasi-judicial public hearing on Federal Capital Territory (FCT) administration in Nigeria. Halliday and Hasan's (1989) Generic Structure Potential serves as the theoretical framework. The study examines forty video recordings of the 2008 public hearings on the FCT Administration. The presentations of complainants include four obligatory elements: Identification of Status, Background Information, Invocation of Government Action and Invocation of Previous Action; in addition they include one optional element: Requests. The presentations of the defendants do not follow any particular structure. The findings indicate that the sequential order of the presentations points to the communicative competence of the interactants and to their shared knowledge of quasi-judicial public hearing procedures and government involvement in the cases.

Keywords: Complainants, Defendants, Generic structure, Quasi-judicial public hearings

1. INTRODUCTION

A quasi-judicial public hearing is a public meeting which is organised in order to obtain public testimony or comments on the violations of legal rights of citizens (Meinig, 1998). Quasi-judicial public hearings are sometimes referred to as public inquiries or parliamentary inquiries in such countries as the United Kingdom and Ireland. They are usually chaired by judges, lawyers and, sometimes, by academics and businessmen (Burton and Carlen, 1979). These hearings are conducted by the executive and legislative arms of government. The legislature has the oversight function of carrying out investigative or quasi-judicial public hearings to monitor some of the

activities of the executive arm of government. The executive may also call for investigative public hearings, and in these cases, they appoint judges to chair the public hearing panels.

Quasi-judicial public hearings involve presentations, questioning, and admission of documented evidence. The discourse structure of a public hearing starts with an oath-taking by the complainants/defendants. This is followed by the presentation of the complainants or defendants. After this, the chairperson of the committee invites other members of the panel to interrogate the complainant/defendant. After answering the questions, the complainants state their prayers and written statements and other legal documents are admitted as exhibits. Finally, the chairman may ask some last minute questions, make comments and promises, and thanks the complainant or defendant.

Language studies on public hearings have primarily focused on legislative public hearings¹ (e.g. Gring-Pemble, 2001; Buttny and Cohen, 2007; and Simon & Jerit, 2007) which are not the focus of this study. Most of the linguistic studies on quasi-judicial public hearings that exist dwell on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings in South Africa (McCormick and Bock, 1999; Anthonissen, 2006; Bock et al, 2006; Verdoolaege, 2006; Bock, 2008; Verdoolaege, 2009a and 2009b). Furthermore, these studies have focused on the narrative (McCormick and Bock, 1999; Blommaert et al 2006), grammatical (Bock, 2008) sociolinguistic (Anthonissen, 2006) and critical discourse aspects (Verdoolaege, 2009a) of the hearings. These studies have not paid full attention to the generic structure of the presentations, which is important in revealing the form and function of any text.

McCormick and Bock (1999) examined the narrative structure of the TRC hearing using Labov's theory of personal narratives. They reveal that the narrative has the structure of abstract,

¹ There are two types of public hearing: legislative and quasi-judicial. A legislative public hearing is meant to obtain public input on legislative matters (Meinig, 1998).

orientation, complicating action, resolution, and evaluation. However, the elements identified in their study are broad and can apply to any type of narrative, without specifying elements that are peculiar to a quasi-judicial public hearing. Although Unuabonah (forthcoming) examines the generic structure of the 2008 quasi-judicial public hearing of the FCT administration, the generic structure of the presentation stage was not analysed. The presentation of witnesses was treated cursorily as just one of the stages in the interaction. Thus, the generic structure of witnesses' presentations in quasi-judicial public hearings in Nigeria has not been fully explored and may not be effectively determined from these studies.

The presentation stage of the quasi-judicial public hearing is a major aspect of the hearing. This is the stage in which complainants and defendants narrate past experiences of victimisation and defend their actions in relation to these cases respectively. It is on this basis that the hearing panel can investigate the issues and make recommendations to the Senate. Accounting for the generic structure of the presentations is needed in order to understand the form and functions of the presentations. This study, therefore, examines the generic structure of the presentation of testimony by complainants/defendants (C/D) in the 2008 quasi-judicial public hearing on FCT administration in Nigeria.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS IN NIGERIA

In the past few years, there has been an increase in the number of quasi-judicial public hearings in Nigeria. This, perhaps, may be due to the prolonged military rule in the country, which did not allow the rule of law or other democratic processes to take place. Examples of such hearings in Nigeria include the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission of 1999, the Osun Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2011, and the fuel subsidy probe of 2012

Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, was created in 1976 when it became expedient to have a new seat of government because of the congestion in Lagos, the former FCT. However, it was not until 1991 that the President of Nigeria moved to Abuja. However, due to poverty and lack of respect for planning regulations, the Master Plan of the territory was not followed. In 2003, the twelfth Minister of the FCT, Mallam Nasiru el-Rufai, was mandated to transform Abuja into a capital city by following the Master Plan. This led to demolitions and revocation of titles of lands (Makinde, 2008).

In March 2008, the Nigerian Senate commissioned the Senate committees on FCT and Housing, led by Senator Abubakar Sodangi, the chairman of the Senate committee on FCT, to probe the FCT administration from 1999 to 2007. The hearing was inaugurated on the 9th of April, 2008 and ended on the 14th of May, 2008. Issues in the public hearing focused on cases of ejection, demolition of property and revocation of titles of lands and property in the FCT. The committee received several applications from different persons who felt wronged by the past FCT administrations and some of these persons appeared before the hearing panel in order to present their cases, as well as officials of the FCT, who had to defend their actions during this period.

3. GENRE AND GENERIC STRUCTURE

Genre analysis is the study of situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalised academic or professional settings (Bhatia, 1997). Bhatia (2002:5) argues that a generic description can serve as a model, where it can be used as an ideal example “for learners to analyse, understand and exploit in their writing to innovate and respond to new situations.” Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday and Hasan, 1989; Henry and Roseberry, 1997; and Ansary and Babaii, 2005 and 2009) and the Specific Purposes approach (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1997 and 2002) are

two common theories of genre that are used in the analysis of texts. They deal with the identification of recurring patterns used in organising the content of a genre and the relation of these patterns to specific linguistic features (Bruce, 2009).

The SFL model, the Generic Structure Potential (GSP), considers the interaction between linguistic patterns and context in its description of any genre. The Generic Structure Potential is a condensed statement of the conditions under which a text will be seen as one which is appropriate to a specific Contextual Configuration (CC). The CC is ‘an account of the significant attributes of a social activity’ (Halliday and Hasan 1989:63). GSP expresses the total range of optional, iterative, and obligatory elements and their order in the text. Halliday and Hasan (1989) makes use of notations such as round brackets () to indicate the optionality of enclosed elements and the caret sign (^) to show the sequence of the elements. It is, therefore, possible to express the total range of obligatory, optional, and iterative elements and their sequence in such a way that all the possibilities and/or potential of text structure for every text appropriate to a specific CC may be exhausted. Thus, it is possible to state the GSP of any genre. Thus, each text may have a different actual structure, but each realises a possibility built into its GSP. In view of this, it is possible to establish the GSP of a quasi-judicial public hearing presentation in order to understand the interactional structure of the presentation and be able to account for the obligatory, optional, and iterative elements, as well as the sequence of the elements in the discourse.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several studies have been carried out on quasi-judicial public hearings. most of which concentrate on the TRC hearings in South Africa. For example, Bock, et al., (2006) analyse ‘what has been lost’ in the interpretation and transcription process of two TRC testimonies. They contend that the official TRC records only allow access to a limited truth, as the records are

inadequate in many ways and that a number of ‘truths’, both of the narrative and factual nature, have inevitably been lost through the interpretation and transcription process. They examine some significant omissions and errors in the official TRC record and suggest that the inaccuracy not only compromises to an extent the goals of the TRC, but also casts a measure of doubt on the value of some TRC scholarship.

Bock (2008) explores the use of tense, direct speech, and code-switching in two testimonies at the Human Rights Violation Hearings of the South African TRC. She observes that these are used to express evaluative meanings and position the speakers, the police and their audience in relation to their narratives. She opines that in multilingual contexts, code-switching functions as an appraisal resource. She adds that it is necessary that a close linguistic analysis of the testimonies in the languages in which the testimonies were originally presented should be carried out, in order to appreciate the subtle meanings and narrative truths.

Verdoolaege (2009a) examines the TRC hearing from the perspective of critical discourse analysis and asserts that it is through the discursive level that the TRC has exerted/is still exerting a long lasting impact on the South African society. She opines that the TRC provided a discursive forum for thousands of ordinary citizens and that by means of testimonies from apartheid victims and perpetrators, the TRC composed an officially recognised archive of the apartheid past. She posits that the reconciliation discourse created at the TRC victim hearings formed a template for talking about a traumatic past, and it opened up the debate on reconciliation.

Verdoolaege (2009b) analyses discursive material from the South African TRC, using Goffman’s theories on participation framework and change in footing. She maintains that a discursive setting such as the public hearings of a truth and reconciliation commission can be

highly intricate and layered when considering the role of the various discourse participants. The testifying victims, the TRC commissioners, and the audience engage in various forms of subordinate communication in addition to the standardised and expected interaction between victims and commissioners. In all, the studies which have been reviewed have made use of grammar, critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis and sociolinguistics. None of the writers of these studies used the Generic Structure Potential in the analysis of the quasi-judicial public hearing discourse narratives, which is important in revealing the discursive and communicative patterns in the hearing.

5. DATA AND METHOD

The data for this study consist of forty presentations made by complainants/defendants before a hearing panel in the 2008 national quasi-judicial public hearing on FCT administration in Nigeria. Although about two thousand people submitted written memoranda to the hearing panel, the exact number of people who made oral presentations was not given by the hearing panel. The report of the committee showed only the number of people who submitted written memoranda and/or made oral presentations. Efforts were made to get the exact number of those who made oral presentations but the committee could not provide this information. Based on this, forty hearing sessions were purposively selected for the study. From the sampled interactions, thirty-two were complainants' presentations and eight defendants' presentations. The full hearing sessions were studied and the presentation stage was isolated for further studies. The data for the study were collected from video recordings of the 2008 quasi-judicial public hearing in Nigeria, from African Independent Television (AIT), Alagbado, Lagos. The data were transcribed, and analysed, using Halliday and Hasan's (1989) Generic Structure Potential. Issues that relate to participants' shared knowledge during the hearing were also studied (Odebunmi, 2006).

6. ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

Presentation is the stage where complainants state their complaints and defendants state and defend their activities in relation to complaints that have been raised. It consists of statements, complaints, and evidence presented to the hearing panel. It is an obligatory part of the interaction as it is the main reason for the hearing. The presentations of the complainants are first listened to by the panel. Then, based on some of the complaints, the chairman sends letters of invitation to persons who may have given instructions on demolition, revocation, sale of government houses, etc, and persons who carried out such instructions to defend their actions. Thus, the presentations of the defendants and complainants (on the same issue) do not feature in the same session. The presentation is usually given in the past tense unlike the earlier structures which are usually rendered in the present tense.

6.1. Presentation of complainants

As earlier stated, thirty-two presentations were those of the complainants. As these were studied, certain elements were found to reoccur throughout the presentations. The complainants always started their presentations by stating their names and social status. This part is usually an answer to the instruction given by the chairman of the hearing panel (see the appendix for a full transcript of one the hearing sessions). Thereafter, the complainants provide a background to their complaint by informing the HP about the period the incident took place, the government agencies involved in the matter, and so on. Thereafter, they report the actions carried out by government officials, which usually focus on demolition, revocation and ejection. Then, they report the actions they carried out in order to redress the actions of the government. After this, the complainants say their prayers or request. However, this particular aspect of the presentation, that is the prayers, does not always occur during the presentations. In some cases, the

complainants wait till the HP chairman asks them to say their prayers before they do so, which usually occurs after the panel has fully interrogated the complainants. In the study data, exactly half of the complainant did not say their prayers during the presentation. Based on this analysis, the following stages are identified: Identification of Status (IS), Background Information (BI), Invocation of Government Action (IGA), Invocation of Previous Action (IPA), and Request or prayers (R). Thus, the generic structure potential (GSP) for the hearing can be catalogued as:

$$IS^{\wedge}BI^{\wedge}IGA^{\wedge}IPA^{\wedge}(R)$$

The caret sign shows the sequence of the elements. The round brackets indicate the optionality of the enclosed element. Thus, R is optional while IS, BI, IGA and IPA are obligatory elements.

The GSP represented here is a condensed statement suggesting that a hearing session in a Nigerian quasi-judicial public hearing starts with the Identification of Status, which is followed by Background Information, Invocation of Government Action, and Invocation of Previous Action. Request may or may not occur during the presentation as some of the complainants wait till the end of the interrogation when they are asked by the hearing panel to make their requests. The model presented here is typical of what one finds in legal proceedings (this is partly why the hearing is a quasi-judicial one) where a plaintiff is expected to state his/her name, provide the background or the issues relating to the case before stating the actions carried against him/her by the defendant. The different stages of a complainant's presentation (in order to show the sequence in the narration) are exemplified in Table 1:

The first stage, IS, comes up when the complainants give their names, their designation and their position in relation to the case. Some of the complainants represent themselves, some represent a

Table 1. Macrostructural elements in a witness' presentation in the 2008 quasi-judicial public hearing on FCT administration

Macro-rhetorical Elements	Sentential Examples
Identification of Status	My names are Madiya Isaac Fitman [sic]. I reside at eh above beside Mesh permanent suite... I am representing the entire...we are about 3500 people affected in that area...
Background Information	So ok you may recall that this property was created in November 1982 by the then Minister, Major General Nasko...
Invocation of Government Action	Later, after one week of this verification, we got...we saw these people coming down again...the AMAC...
Invocation of Previous Action	So on that aspect, we wrote a first letter to Mr. President by then. We wrote to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria...
Request	So our prayers have been: please relocate these allottees who have spent all their life savings and even borrowed money to raise – erect these structures...

group which they belong to while some complainants are lawyers who are representing their clients. An example of IS is presented:

Example 1

Fitman: My names are Madiya Isaac Fitman [sic]. I reside at eh above beside Mesh permanent suite... I am representing the entire...we are about 3500 people affected in that area [Sic].

In example 1, the complainant states his name, his address and his status as a representative of a group of people whose shops had been demolished. Ideationally, the utterances identify the complainant's status and his relationship with the case. Thus, the processes involved include the relational process (are) and material process (reside/am representing) where the complainant identifies himself and establishes his activity in relation to the case. The use of the present tense in this part of the presentation demonstrates that the complainant is talking about issues which relate to his identification and that of the property. Interpersonally, the utterances are used by the

speaker to establish a relationship between himself and the hearers (HP). The use of the first person pronouns (my, I, we) indicates that the complainant is a direct victim of the illegal activities of the government. Textually, they serve as a springboard for further development of the presentation. The use of the active voice further reinforces the fact that the complainant is a direct victim of the activities of the government.

The next stage of the presentation is the presentation of the BI of the case. This is the point where the complainant gives information that is necessary to the understanding of the case. The complainant continues in the excerpt:

Example 2

Fitman: ...So okay you may recall that this property was created in November 1982 by the then Minister Major General Nasko who constituted a committee for the...for the relocation of Garki village artisans, traders from Apo village.

In example 2, the speaker presents the background to his testimony. Ideationally, the utterances detail the complainant's reasoning as to why the future actions carried out by the officials were wrong. The part of the narrative involves the mental process which is indicated in the verb 'recall'. 'Recall' implies that the hearers, that is, the HP have shared background knowledge of the information the complainant is about to give since the matter is of public knowledge. The material process is indicated in verbs such as 'created' and 'constituted' which show how the property came into existence. Also, the complainant makes use of the past tense which shows that he is referring to past actions, apart from 'recall' which is made in reference to the HP. Interpersonally, this part of the narrative co-opts the addressee as a witness of the development of the property. The utterances also function to persuade the HP that the property was acquired legally by the complainant. Textually, they serve to develop the story and to function as a reference point for the HP to determine the legality or illegality of the acquisition of the property.

The reference to the date the property was developed and the name of the FCT Minister who developed the property indicates that the complaint is tenable since the government started the development of the property.

The third stage in the presentation is IGA. This is the stage where the complainants report the actions of demolition, eviction or revocation which were carried out by government officials and the effect of these actions. This can be seen in the example below:

Example 3

Fitman: ...Later, after one week of this verification, we got...we saw these people coming down again...the AMAC...the the Development Control with police. They came and started marking the whole houses. [sic]

In this example, the complainant states the action that was carried out by Development Control and the police, who came to mark the houses for demolition. Ideationally, the utterances reveal the actions carried out by the officials against the complainant. The processes involved include behavioural and material processes. The verb 'saw' indicates behavioural process which shows that the speaker witnessed the actions carried out by government officials and his testimony is factual and should be taken as the truth. The verbs 'came' and 'started' indicates material process which depicts the actions of the government officials against the speaker. Interpersonally, the utterances serve to persuade the HP that the actions of the officials were illegal.

Textually, they function as a contrast against the backdrop of the events (which were legal) leading to the possession of the property. Thus, the marked theme in the clause, 'later, after one week of verification' emphasises that the government itself had verified the land before the illegal action of demolition took place. The complainant makes reference to 'AMAC' - Abuja Municipal Area Council. The use of the abbronym, 'AMAC' indicates shared contextual belief based on shared situational knowledge. The complainant makes use of this abbronym because he

believes that the HP knows what the abbreviation means. Also, the reference to ‘Development Control’ is also based on shared knowledge about government involvement. The term ‘Development Control’ actually means Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) which is another agency responsible for development in Abuja. There is shared situation knowledge of this term as the interactants know what ‘Development Control’ means. These lexical items point to the political sphere.

The next stage of the presentation is IPA. This is the stage where the complainants state the actions they carried out in order to revert the actions of the government officials. Some write letters to top government officials while others go to the law court. An example is presented:

Example 4

Fitman: ...So on that aspect, we wrote a first letter to Mr. President by then. We wrote to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria... The letter was ignored and eh we wrote this letter... The said letter was copied eh to the Speaker of the House of Representatives...[sic]

In the example above, the complainant talks about the actions he had previously undertaken in order to get justice. This is important because the hearing panel (HP) expects the complainants to seek redress even before appearing at the public hearing. Ideationally, the utterances detail the actions carried out by the complainant to redress the situation. Thus, it involves the material process which can be found in the verb ‘wrote’ and ‘copied’. Interpersonally, the utterances serve to reassure the HP that steps had actually been taken by the complainant to seek redress against the actions of the government. Textually, they function as a consequence of the action previously carried out by the government which is evident in the use of the conjunction ‘so’. Homophoric reference is made to ‘Mr President’ and ‘the Speaker’ as it points out to shared situation knowledge (see Martin and Rose, 2003). The complainant makes these references based on shared knowledge of government involvement.

The next stage of the presentation is R. This is the part of the interaction that is not carried out by all the complainants. Some of them stop at Invocation of Previous Action. Others wait till the end of the interrogation stage when the chairman of the hearing panel demands for their prayers. The complainant continues:

Example 5

Fitman: ...So our prayers have been: please relocate these allottees who have spent all their life savings and even borrowed money to raise – erect these structures - to another simple place... and then compensate them or whatever.

In this example, the complainant requests relocation and compensation, which are in line with the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act. Ideationally, it reveals what the complainant expects the HP to do. Thus, the material process is used in the narrative which is indicated in verbs such as 'relocate' and 'compensate' which are plain words that relate to justice.

Interpersonally, the utterances serve to persuade the HP to carry out some actions that are of benefit to the complainant. The word 'prayer' is a sub-technical word that is used in the context of public hearings. The imperative mood is used in this section of the presentation as evident in the verbs used. Textually, the utterances mark the end of the complaint. The conjunction, 'so' indicates that the request is based on the information given by the complainant about the actions of the complainant and the defendant. The complainant acts on the shared contextual belief based on shared knowledge of the procedure of the public hearing. That is, it is expected and known by all in the hearing that the complainants will make requests and these are not rejected by the hearing panel.

Sometimes during presentation, the chairman or the vice-chairman may interrupt C/D in order to ask for some clarifications. This is exemplified below:

Example 6

Fitman: Then the water board again supplied water to the area and government provided access road to this area. In 2004 //

Sodangi: //When you say government, Municipal or FCDA?

In the course of the complainant's presentation, in example 6, the chairman interrupts the complainant in order to know which of the government agencies was responsible for the provision of the access road. This indicates that the chairman has more power and a higher role in the interaction and this indicates the asymmetrical relationship between the two.

6.2. Presentation of Defendants

The presentations of the defendants are flexible. Thus, there is no specific structure that the defendants follow in their presentation. This is because the defendants have already been informed of the matters they are expected to address. Thus, they just state the questions and give the answers to the questions before the hearing panel brings up other sets of questions based on the answers given in the presentations, and give reasons why they took those actions. Examples are used to illustrate this.

Example 7

Ehintero: Em Mr Chairman, let me thank you and the committee most sincerely, for the courtesy of this invitation. I received this letter on the 10th of this month in which this committee invited me to personally attend this hearing today at 11a.m. In particular, I am expected as a retired IG to provide this committee with a brief on matters bordering on ejections of residents from their residents, particularly the scenario of the ejection of the Late Honourable Justice Bashir Sambo and disobedience or failure to implement/enforce court orders during my tenure... I want to say without any iota of doubt in my mind, that I have no hands in the death of Justice Sambo.

In the example above, the defendant already knows the matter which he is expected to address and he proceeds to speak on the issue. Ideationally, the utterance serves as a background and introduction to his presentation. Thus, the verbs used indicate mental (am expected/ want) and material process (received). The relational process is not used at this point since the HP knows who he is, unlike the complainants who had to introduce themselves. Thus, he speaks in relation to the activities he had carried out and his opinions and attitude towards the case. Interpersonally, he establishes an interpersonal relationship between himself and the HP. This is evident in the appreciation made and the use of the vocative, 'Mr. Chairman', which foregrounds the fact that he is speaking to the chairman and the panel. He makes use of the imperative mood (let me thank you) and the declarative (I received this letter) which indicates that the first sentence relates to the HP and the other sentences are made in relation to the case itself.

Textually, the utterances establish a relationship between the matter to be presented and the expectations or questions earlier raised by the HP in the letter. This is evident in the use of the demonstrative 'this' in 'this letter'. The reference to Justice Sambo shows that he knows the matter to be addressed. Thus, he also acts on shared situation knowledge which is indicated by the clause, 'I am expected'.

Example 8

Ehindero: Perhaps, to put more light on how the police is organised, because it is only then that you will see how the functions are shared.

In example 8, the defendant backs up his answer by describing the organisation of the police force which is based on the 1999 constitution of Nigeria. Ideationally, the utterance further provides the background to the narrative. Interpersonally, it is meant to reassure the HP that the actions taken by the defendant were based on the norms of his profession. The utterance is an appeal to authority which is meant to add credibility to his story. Since the constitution does not

expect him as the IG to know what is happening in the states, then he could not have known of Sambo's ejection, even though the police was involved. Textually, the utterance provides reasons for the actions of the defendant which is evident in the use of the conjunction, 'because' which indicates that there is a relationship of consequence between the norms of his profession and his actions. Below is another example of a defendant's presentation:

Example 9

Abass: Thank you Mr. Chairman and distinguished senators. Before I start, I would like to make one or two corrections. One//

Sodangi: //No. Give us your full name because of the recording...

Abass: Eh my name is Abass Umar. I am the director of special duties overseeing the sale of Federal Government houses...Ha, for the purpose of overview, I think it will be fair if you can give me five minutes to rundown through these submissions and that will at the end of the day, address some of the questions we're expected to address ...//

Sodangi: //No Abass because of time. ... save your time, we go to the question. Question one, the answer is this...very simple and clear.

In this example, the defendant starts his presentation by stating his name and his status, just as we have in the complainants' presentations. He does this because the chairman had addressed him as a doctor and because the chairman asked him to do so. Although he has a presentation which he could read, the chairman of the panel instructs him to read the questions he had received and state the answers. Thus, he simply reads the questions and answers them.

7. CONCLUSION

The analysis of a public hearing reveals the nature and discursive patterns in a public interrogation. In this study, an attempt has been made to study the generic structure of the presentations of the quasi-judicial public hearing on FCT administration in Nigeria. The GSP of

the presentation of complainants reveal four obligatory elements: Identification of Status, Background Information, Invocation of Government Action and Invocation of Previous Action; and one optional element: Request. The presentation of the defendants, in contrast, did not follow any particular structure or order. The findings indicate that the sequential order of the presentations points to a certain communicative competence of the interactants. The witnesses made their presentations based on shared knowledge of government involvement and shared knowledge of the public hearing procedure. The presentation is characterised with the use of relational, material, mental, and behavioural processes as well as the declarative and imperative mood. The lexical items used in the hearing point to the political sphere, public hearing procedures and justice. Unlike the elements identified in scholarship on the TRC hearings which are broad and can apply to any type of narrative, the elements identified in the present study are specific to a quasi-judicial public hearing narrative. This research is in no way exhaustive. Further research can be carried out on other narratives/presentations in quasi-judicial public hearings in order to determine if this GSP also applies to them.

Biographical Note

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APPENDIX

Prince Fitman's Testimony

Secretary: I

Fitman: I

Secretary: Your name?

Fitman: Isaac Fitman

Secretary: Do solemnly swear

Fitman: Do solemnly swear

Secretary: that the evidence that I shall give

Fitman: that the evidence that I shall give

Secretary: before this committee

Fitman: before this committee

Secretary: shall be the truth

Fitman: shall be the truth

Secretary: the whole truth

Fitman: the whole truth

Secretary: and nothing but the truth

Fitman: and nothing but the truth

Secretary: so help me God

Fitman: so help me God

Sodangi: Thank you sir. Sit down and tell us your full particulars but before then (unclear). Are you here? Ok after him.

Fitman: My names are Madiya Isaac Fitman. I reside at eh above beside Mesh permanent suite. I want to thank this committee first of all for creating this forum for all us to come//

Ibo Sen: // Don't worry. Don't worry. Just go straight to the point...what happened. Are you representing the entire?

Fitman: Yes I am representing the entire...we are about 3500 people affected in that area.

Ibo Sen.: Is that an association?

Fitman: Yes that's an association.

Ibo Sen.: Are you the secretary or the chairman?

Fitman: I am the secretary general of the association.

Ibo Sen.: Ok go ahead.

Fitman: So okay you may recall that this property was created in Nov 1982 by the then Minister Major General Nasko who constituted a committee for the for the relocation of Garki village artisans, traders from Apo village. The committee by then comprising of SSS, FCDA and Environmental Protection board and which was welcomed because there was association on ground that...that helped in putting things in order to maintain law and order in that place. We built police station and other things which was initially not created. Then we welcomed the committee and we partnered with them. But four days or so after the...we equally announced in the newspaper that every allottee should come for their...for verification at AMAC which all of us complied and we went there with our original allocation papers and opened two files each with passport and submitted to them. They can attest to this. Later, after one week of this verification, we got...we saw these people coming down again...the AMAC...the the Development Control with police.

They came and started marking the whole houses. We asked them why was this? No...no ah explanation was given. So we said why ask us...you gave us this place and we now...we have put it into something habitable and now you have come back. We thought you are back to clear off the squatters, those with containers that block the road. No explanation was given to that effect. So on that aspect, we wrote a first letter to Mr. President by then. We wrote to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, asking ...our...the letter was the letter was. We appealed to the referred proposed demolition exercise on the above permanent site. The Apo mechanic village, Abuja and then we prayed and gave them the historical background of that place, how it came to be and our effort to make that place a habitable place and to equally to carry out or trade. That letter stated the effect of that demolition, our observation which we told them the impending hardship which people will suffer, if they carry out that demolition and we prayed that before that could be done, we should be given a time to pack our families and then let them come and enumerate the physical structures on the ground to enable them pay compensation and relocate us to another alternative place. The letter was ignored and eh we wrote this letter...was copied to the Senate President by then. The said letter was copied eh to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. We copied to Dr//

Ibo Sen.: // Don't worry...don't worry.

Fitman: and all the prominent men in Nigeria and we waited. On the 28th day of July, chairman sir, If I tell you that we lost nothing less than 8 people in that first day. I know of one man that owned a very big mechanic workshop. He could not stand that sight, he collapsed and died.....on the spot and so many people were hospitalized. I know of another man eh Ibo man that owned a Mercedes shop. He was in the sickbed when he heard that demolition. He died on that sickbed at Asokoro General Hospital. Men and women were thrown out under that heavy rain at that time. It was a serious thing. I wish you witnessed that scene. We cried with tears. We wrote another letter asking the President, the Minister that is the then FCT Minister pleading with him. Now that this has come, the bulldozer has come. Let us be relocated to another place and pay compensation to give us.....give us a soft landing so that people will not lose all. We followed this letter and to others, even the Senate was copied, the Speaker was copied. And we kept on pleading and nothing came out of it up till today. In the July in November last year, we said we could not go ahead, keeping quiet as others other... partners have gone top court we want to follow it. We want to dialogue with the government to see how far he could go with this issue. We wrote to the present Minister, congratulating him on his appointment and then resubmitted our case to his hearing, pleading that since this administration has a listening ear and is compassionate on people's plight, he should listen to our appeal. This we have not gotten anything. On February, January this year, we wrote another reminder and nothing came out of it and up till now. Now...lastly, the earlier of March, we wrote the second reminder on the same issue, to which nothing has come out. We are very grateful when this committee was set up and we saw it on paper. So we quickly obliged. And our prayers have been, relocate us to another simple place with infrastructures. I could remember when the Minister was saying... said on Monday that demolition supposed not to be carried on a place that has no infrastructures. Actually that place has no access road, no water, no light. It was the committee that attracted NEPA and we bought the generator- I mean the transformer by ourselves. The committee contributed 5-5 thousand

naira per shop...per shop to put up a transformer there. But when the demolition came, everything was gone. So our prayers have been: please relocate these allottees who have spent all their life savings and even borrowed money to raise –erect these structures to another simple place. Thank you and then compensate them or whatever. Let them have a shed over their head because we are all Nigerians and we have all been invited to develop FCT. Thank you very much.

Sodangi: Thank you. Give us your submission. We want to thank you for your very pathetic case as presented. Give us your submission. But let me ask you. Give us your paper. Oh don't worry. Stay there. Presentation made by Mr Secretary, name

Fitman: Prince Prince Fitman

Sodangi: Presentation made by you on behalf of Apov Mechanic and Artisans is hereby admitted as exhibit 37. Thank you very much. Let me ask. As at today, I am made to understand your current... your that that Apov mechanic quarters that that you are staying that there's another allocation or reallocation eh place after the present Apo mechanic village which you are talking about...Is it correct that some mechanic...Is that where your people have been reallocated?

Fitman: No sir

Sodangi: You are not the one?

Fitman: We are not the ones reallocated to that place. That is when they drove all the mechanic from all the FCT and moved them there. Then then after eh ah after the demolition so all the mechanic formed their association and moved down to...Some were able to get through the long leg and got their allocation there. I tell you-one-tenth...it was only one-tenth of the mechanic were allocated there.

Sodangi: You mean some of your members have the privilege to have their allocation there?

Fitman: None of them none of them at the moment. Those we have...this letter this letter incorporated this association. So as far as I know and I am concerned, the members we have. We have...we have nobody that is there because we have our list and the names of our members.

Sodangi: Okay Okay. Thank you very much.

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