



POLITICS AND POLITIKING REGISTERS IN NIGERIAN CAMPAIGNS

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examines the register used in politics to achieve persuasion. Politics is a psychological warfare for winning peoples' heart to do the biddings of politicians. Propaganda is a major tool politicians deploy to fight political opponents. It is a smart way of telling people black is white and make them believe it, Propaganda itself is not possible without language (literal or figurative). Language is central to communication. In Nigeria, effective use of language is an assurance for political success. Political register helps us understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, exercise power, and keep power. The speeches of these politicians are replete with unachievable objectives enshrined in propaganda meant for some gullible electorates. Their diction changes from that of persuasion, emotion, pity, among others to one of violence when it suits them. Politicians employ different political strategies with the aid of language to rightly convince, confuse and elicit necessary information and subsequently votes from the electorates. The theory used for this study is the Speech Act Theory. The methodology is qualitative and quantitative. A survey design is used. This study evinces that political register makes use of linguistic devices, re-branding, marketing of candidates' and pushing the narratives to political parties to help them be on top of the game. The speeches selected are of very high quality and the messages are very successfully communicated. We propose that when a politician delivers these sorts of speeches the goal is to draw the audience to himself and convince the electorate of why they are the better candidates for the election. To achieve this, politicians use their words in subtle and careful ways that capture the attention, interest, and admiration of the listeners. These speeches employ words and varying sentence structures. The sentences employ the pronoun system to deliberately make the audience believe the speech is about them – their ideas, opinions, desires, and comradeship.*

KEYWORDS: Politics, Political Language, Propaganda.



Exordium

The focus of this paper is to show how language plays a significant role in political campaign as it relates to effective electioneering process. This study covers the period ranging from 2013-2023, how politicking has fared in Nigeria and how effective register has been used as a tool in the various electioneering campaigns. There are two key terms in the topic under investigation, one is *register*, and the other is *political campaign*.

In linguistics, the concept of register refers to a variety of language that is associated with a particular social situation or context. It is a way in which language adapts to different social functions, settings, and relationships between speakers. Register involves using specific vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and even nonverbal cues to convey meaning in a way that is appropriate and effective within a given context. Registers can vary widely depending on factors such as the participants involved, their social roles, the purpose of communication, and the level of formality required. Linguists often identify different registers based on the specific domains in which they are used, such as legal, academic, technical, informal, colloquial, religious, and so on (Isaac Eyi Ngulube 43). Registers can differ:

The formal register is commonly used in official settings, professional environments, or academic contexts. It typically employs standard grammar, precise vocabulary, and avoids slang or colloquial expressions. For example, a legal document, a scientific research paper, or a business presentation would typically require a formal register.

The informal register is characterized by a more relaxed and casual style of language. It is commonly used in everyday conversations among friends, family members, or peers. Informal registers often include slang, colloquialisms, and familiar expressions. Text messages, personal emails, or casual conversations are examples of situations where an informal register is employed.

The technical register is associated with specialized fields, such as medicine, engineering, or computer science. It utilizes terminology, jargon, and technical vocabulary specific to those domains. Technical registers are used in professional communication within these fields, including research papers, technical manuals, or expert discussions.

The intimate register is used in very close and personal relationships, such as between romantic partners or family members. It often involves private jokes, shared experiences, and a high level of familiarity and emotional connection. The language used in love letters, personal diaries, or private conversations would fall into this category. It's important to note that individuals are often proficient in multiple registers and can shift between them depending on the context. Register allows us to adapt our language to fit social norms, convey meaning effectively, and establish and maintain appropriate relationships with others.

Language is a tool for electioneering campaign; language forms the basis of communication between very large number of people, politicians are thus affected by language. *Political campaign*, on the other hand, is when election merchants deploy their propagandist techniques such as parallelism, euphemism, name calling ahead of elections.



In Nigerian society today, effective use of language is an assurance for political success. Politicians embark on several actions beyond imagination to influence the votes and opinions of the masses. Okoye citing Beard puts it that "...the language of politics helps us to understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, exercise power and keep power". Okoye goes further to say that the utterances of these politicians are replete with unachievable objectives coated in propaganda meant for some gullible electorates. The diction changes from that of persuasion, emotion, pity, among others to that of violence, if need be. This constitutes the style of politicians. The language of a politician reflects his intention not his personality. The language is replete with propaganda, repetition, metaphors twisting, parallelism, ambiguity, coinages, among others. The choice of language is deliberate, and the ultimate intension is to win the confidence of the electorates or voters.

Language is seen a tool or vehicle for effectiveness mobilization of the people towards a desired cause or to inhibit them from taking actions. Abusive utterances are used to coerce people to vote for them. Words are used to demean and discredit opponents and in certain cases when they jump ship or carpet cross, such demeaning and discrediting words are used against them by their opponents. Whether verbal or nonverbal, meanings are made through their adverts using such devices such as propagandist language, allusion, code switching and code mixing. The following examples are illustrative: 'Atikulate', 'Obidient', 'kwakwasian', 'say Buhari', and 'Emilokan' and other flattering and praise songs.

Ikeke citing Daniel (19) avers that language plays a pivotal role in Nigerian political processes especially Nigerian politicians used language in a thug-like manner. Ikeke in the article *Negative Campaigning* argues that thuggery has come to characterize Nigerian campaigns and describes it as "political macheting". Campaigns instead of projecting positive values are used to attack and destroy the opponents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A *political language* could be said to be a register of words that deal with politics. Political language is produced by politicians, it is the language of professional politicians and political institutions. Political language involves the conflicts, cooperation, and compromise necessary to get things done; the language that explains the political process. It follows then that every profession or activity man engages in has its own peculiar way of using language. Thus, we have a specialized register; this refers to the use of language to reflect the speaker's profession, occupation, or field of specialization.

Yusuf states that the register of politics or political science include: ministers, constitution, presidential system, parliamentary system, multi-party, one-party, executive, legislative, judiciary, amendment, majority leader, minority leader, chief whip, clerk of the house, national assembly, elections, campaign, lobby, two-third majority, voice vote, impeachment, by election, civilian government, militocracy, diarchy, democracy, autocracy, socialism, feudalism, communism, nepotism, Nazism, Fascism, gubernatorial election, house of representatives, house of assembly, coalition government, despot, sit-tight, totalitarian government, tribunal, and so on. The political



register has certain features that are peculiar and are deployed in political campaigns to achieve specific objectives. *Slogan* is “a short easily remembered phrase used to describe the character of something especially a political idea or product”. In this context a slogan is a memorable phrase used in commercial or political context. It is a repetitive expression of an idea or purpose. A political slogan generally expresses a goal or an aim.

A lexical item is said to be a single word a part of a word or a chain of words that forms the basic elements of language lexicon or vocabulary. When lexical items are composed in more than one word, they are either called lexical chunks, gambits, lexical phrases, or lexicalized stems etc. In some instances, are called polyword. In this study, lexical items, simply refer to the choice of words peculiarly used in political campaigns. The lexis of political language is specific the use of *abstract nouns*. This is because the average politician likes to be elusive with specific meaning. Political discussions are often not concrete, even though they may be directly linked to a proposed plan of action. In essence politicians are not practical persons. It is not always what the politician says that he does. Politicians use language to *adapt reality* to soothe their purposes.

Next is the use of *implication* (the use of secondary meaning rather than the primary meaning of a word). This allows them to state the truth while using words that can be interpreted in more than one way. For instance, “the room is too warm” may on the surface mean the room is too hot and an air conditioner should be brought in. This same expression for the politician may mean to some extent the air conditioner should be turned off. In a social context, it might be considered more polite not to make the request more directly while in a political context, the implication might represent an attempt by a politician to evade a direct answer.

Ngulube succinctly, defines rhetoric as using language effectively to please or persuade, high-flown style, excessive use of verbal ornamentation. He gives the following words as synonyms: grandiloquence, grandiosity, magniloquence, and ornateness. The talking points is the specialty of talk; a bombastic illuminate, convince, or persuade specific crowds in unambiguous circumstances.

Grammar is another significant feature of the language of politics. The grammar of political discourse varies based on whether the utterances are spoken or written, though the later tends to be more complex than the former. The following features are common in the grammar of language of political campaigns. The pronoun system is used to deliberately make the audience believe the speech is about them rather – their ideas, opinions, desires, and comradeship. Simpson and Mayr posit in their study on *Language and Politics* that pronoun is a linguistic device used by politicians with persuasive functions when it comes to referring to themselves, their parties or their state and nation. They also agree that pronouns when used can either be inclusive or exclusive. For instance, ‘we’ as pronoun when used by politicians is not clear as to who the ‘we’ refers to either the politicians or the party or people (electorates). The pronouns selected are not always predictable, no proper antecedent to determine their choice of pronouns. It is in order here to proffer an example:

“My government/administration will come out with *something* good for the masses”.



In this example how do you conceptualize the meaning of “something good for the masses”. Besides, this statement is not personalized. If this goes otherwise, you cannot blame the speaker who of course is a leader. This is because he said “my government...” Let us produce another good example of non-committal sentences generated by politicians.

“We won’t open our eyes and allow enemies of progress to”

This statement is also not personalized. The major concern of linguists is not whether the pronouns are used formally or informally, the personal involvement of the speaker/writer, and whether their status, class and sex are reflected in the utterances/discourse. Compare the above statement with the one below.

“I, as a person, will see to the...”

In this example the speaker/writer’s statement is personalized and he or she is ready to take responsibility or to take the blame for whatever happens. The main advantage of the use of pronouns to the politicians in their campaign is that it enables them to accept, deny or distance themselves from their responsibility, to encourage their supporters, to distance the opposition and to give a personal touch to their discourse. The fundamental principle of democracy is the right to *ask questions*. Therefore, questions in political language are rarely straight forward and they use the technique that will allow the speaker to clearly establish the context and to manipulate the addressee when they want to frame their questions. For instance: The questions may be preceded by declarative mood thereby conveying the speaker’s attitude.

The adverb *so* is commonly used to suggest that the proposition following is logically consequential and should be automatically accepted. The use of ‘negative forms’ such as ‘*don’t, won’t, can’t*, among others.’ are sometimes contracted to allow the questioner to lead by suggesting that the truth of the proposition is already taken for granted. For instance, “Does the Prime Minister share the widespread concern around the world at the unilateral action of the US in bombing Somalia a couple of days ago again yesterday?” The use of the WH elements to frame questions as well as the use of polar questions. These are questions that require yes or no. They are less open and presuppose that a particular answer to the question is more accepted than any other possible ones. It is an attempt to force the respondents (politicians) to accept or deny the allegation made. For instance,

“Is your Excellency saying that the health ministers do not...”

Politicians also try to use *will* to get the addressees to commit themselves to action. This is so because, when it starts a question, it implies that because of the added politeness associated with the verb, any rejection of the request made will seem unnecessarily rude. For example,

“Will His Excellency assure us that there won’t be increase in the price of kerosene?”

Bombast is a pejorative term for pompous and inflated speech or writing. It is unlike eloquence which is a favourable term for forceful and persuasive discourse. One who uses bombastic words is called *sesquipedalian*. Ojiefu in his article presents Patrick Obahiagbon as one of the highly celebrated masters of bombast in Nigeria political sphere who has his own peculiar coinages and



esoteric grammar in the House of Representative as he was said to be always loaded with big diction or coinages and this defines his style, for instance in Obahiagbon's words:

This has made me suffixed with emotional narcolepsy that the homo-sapiens in the metropolitical geographical enclave of Edo have opted for owanbe-ing over legislative quo-modo discuss, such a reckless display of narcissistic and flamboyant hedonism can encumber our nascent democracy with insidious repercussive and cataclysmic exigencies.

According to Yusuf, bombast generally refers to 'empty rhetoric' or 'a windy grandeur of language'. For instance,

In a perpendicular attention before this August multitude of fellow long-suffering compatriots, I hereby offer yours truly for the nationalistic and patriotic duty of serving your totality of proletariat for the next half a decade minus one in the capacity of a giber. Thus, I crave your maximum patronage.

Our propensity for provision of infrastructural gigantism is highly unquantifiable as it is insatiable. This is our priority. Our party rejects the stereotypical and archetypal inertia in performance. Therefore, we pledge to deliver dividends of democracy in large quantity and zoom the compatriots to the promised land of Abuja."

Ambiguity is a typical element of the language of politics frequently utilized during political campaign and by lawmakers. Vagueness has been utilized from a restricted perspective in scholarly examinations, it has frequently been utilized in a very wide sense promoted by Empson. We for the most part think of it as an interruption from the message and an imperfection of styles. However, if it happens in a scholarly text, we will generally assume the best about the essayist and expect that a tranquil concurrence of elective significance is planned. Essentially, if two degrees of imagery can be at the same time read into a sonnet, we are frequently disposed to acknowledge both as adding to the lavishness of its importance. The words in a sentence occur in a certain linear order. The linear order of words plays a crucial role in determining the meaning of sentences. Consider the sentence below.

"The mother of the boy and the girl will arrive soon."

The sentence is ambiguous in the sense that, it is either about one person (the mother of both the boy and the girl) or about two people (the mother of the boy and in addition, a second person, the girl). Governors often use ambiguity in their political campaigns, especially when they want to confuse people or when they do not want to be completely honest on certain political issues.

Theoretical Framework

The study is premised on the Speech Act Theory of Pragmatics. As Ngulube et al. Posit pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that has its roots in philosophy of language and the contributions of British and American Philosophical Schools of Pragmatics led by G. Frege, L. Wittgenstein, J.L. Austin, J. Searle, P. Grice and Sbisu who developed theories for doing Pragmatics. Its evolution is because of the limitation of structural semantics to capture satisfactorily the sociological and other non-linguistic dimension of verbal communication (Lawal 95). According to Crystal (240), Pragmatics



is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. Similarly, Yule (3) describes 'Pragmatics as concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker and interpreted by a listener.' Thomas (19) defines pragmatics as 'meaning in use and meaning in context.' The deduction from the definitions is that pragmatics is an organized way of explaining language use in relations to the users, interpreters, and the factors that affect the making of utterances and the effects of the utterances in everyday communication. Highlighting the merits of pragmatics, Udofot (127) states:

knowledge of pragmatics, for instance, enable one to interpret not only the literal meaning of an utterance but also the meanings that derive from the norms of formality and politeness that exist in the society where the language is used as well as the shared meanings that derive from the shared previous knowledge of the speaker and hearer and the situation in which the utterances are used.

In other words, there are three essential factors for the discovery of meaning, as suggested by pragmatics, they are:

The society or setting wherein the utterance is made.

The shared previous knowledge between the speaker and the hearer, and

The linguistic context in which the utterances are used.

The variety of uses of words in language to perform different actions had been the interests of linguists for decades. The interest in studying the actions performed with words (utterances) brought about the introduction of the Speech Acts theory, which refers to an utterance and the total speech situation wherein the utterance is issued (Thomas 51). Speech Act theory was the propelling force behind the Anglo-American prominence in pragmatics. It is originally formulated by Austin and improved upon by Searle. Speech acts are staples of communicative life, but only became a topic of sustained investigation in English-speaking world, in the middle of 20th century. Since then, the speech act theory has become influential not only within philosophy, but also in linguistics and other scholarly disciplines (Mitchell 15).

Speech Act is a minimal functional unit in linguistic activity (Searle 16). It is a communicative act performed with the use of oral or written language to bring about change in a situation. It requires not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given setting. J.L. Austin asserts many utterances (things people say) are equivalent to actions, and the utterance creates a new social reality. His aim is to focus on what is done in discourse rather than on what is said, as what is said depends on what is done (Ambrose 10). Concerned with utterances (language in use), which he distinguishes from sentences, Austin proposed the concept of performative utterances to show that all utterances are speech acts, as they perform specific actions. He made a distinction between performatives and constatives; by classifying performatives as utterances which cannot be said to be true or false but can be evaluated by the dimension of felicity and constatives as utterances that can be evaluated along the dimension of truth. To avoid vagueness,



Austin listed three aspects or ways an utterance can be seen as action, known as: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act simply is the “actual words uttered” (speech that has taken place). Yule posits that to produce a meaningful linguistic expression is to perform a locutionary act. Illocutionary act is the real actions which are performed by the utterance: where saying equals doing as in request Perlocutionary act is the effects the utterance has on the listener. Further, Austin stated that there are felicity conditions necessary for the success of utterances as speech acts. This is to say, each utterance has presuppositions, implications, and commitments conditions.

Some of Austin’s claims, however, were refined by John R. Searle in a more systematic and mentalistic way. Whereas Austin tried to escape the truth-conditional orthodoxy of analytic philosophy, Searle tried to give an analysis of speech acts phenomena in line with this orthodoxy (Sbisa 9, Ambrose 10). In other words, speech act is a theory of constitutive rules for performing illocutionary acts by adopting a social view of linguistic meaning (Korta and Perry 26). Although Searle adopted the three aspects distinction by Austin, he paid more attention to illocutionary acts, which he sees as having both a force and a propositional content. It is important to note that while Austin wanted to distinguish force from meaning, Searle deals with force as an aspect of meaning. He went on to classify the illocutionary act into five categories or types based on the functions assigned to them.

Speech Acts

Assertives	Directives	Expressive	Commissives	Declaratives
Assertions	Suggestions	Apologies	Promises	Decrees
Claims	Requests	Complaints	Threats	Declarations
Reports	Commands	Thanks	Offers	

Source: Ngulube & Cotterel (2)

Assertives: The speaker states a proposition which could be true or false using such verbs as: affirm, believe, conclude, deny, report. **Directives:** the speaker tries to make the hearer do something using such words like: beg, challenge, command, dare, invite, insist, request. **Commissives:** the speaker pledges himself to a future course of actions, using verbs like: guarantee, pledge, promise, swear, vow, undertake, warrant. **Expressives:** the speaker states an attitude about a situation using such verbs as: apologies, appreciate, congratulate, deplore, defeat, regret, thank, welcome. **Declaratives:** the speaker alters the external status or conditioning of an object or situation, solely by making the utterance, for instance:

- 1, I now pronounce you husband and wife.
2. You are guilty.

Furthermore, Searle formulated another felicity conditions on illocutionary acts (Searle 54) in Sbisa as necessary and sufficient conditions for their performance. They are *preparatory condition*,



condition for execution and sincerity conditions. Preparatory conditions include the status or authority of the speaker to perform the speech act, the situation of other parties and so on. Condition for execution can assume an exaggerated importance. Here ceremonies or rituals are considered to accompany the execution of the act, such that it is believed the act is invalidated, if the action is lacking. Sincerity of conditions shows that the speaker must really intend what he says (43). In addition, Searle introduced two types of speech acts: Direct and Indirect Speech Acts. According to Searle in Thomas (93), indirect speech act is one performed by a ‘means of another speech act.’

Generally, speech act theory, are act of communication. Hence it views utterances as acts and consider the production of words or of sentences as the performance of speech acts and posit the speech act as the unit of linguistic communication. It is the task of the speech act theory to explain in which senses and under which conditions uttering something can be doing something, thus providing a conceptual framework for describing and understanding the various kinds of linguistic action (Sbisa). Speech act theory attempts to explain how speakers use language to accomplish intended actions and how hearers infer intended meaning from what is said.

DATA PRESENTATION

Data Set 1: Yemi Osinbajo

(Vice President *Yemi Osinbajo* at the APC campaign as he declares his intention to run for president in 2023 election.)

Dear Nigerians, for the past several years, I have served as Vice President under a true Nigerian patriot, a servant of the nation. He was of peace, and a man of integrity, President Muhammadu Buhari. We have together worked through some of the most difficult times in the history of our nation, but we have remained focused on securing the country, providing infrastructure, and growing our economy. As stipulated in the Nigerian constitution, our tenure will end next year.

In this period of several years I have served, the nation in several capacities at the electives of Mister President represented our country in several high-level international engagements. I have been to practically all the local government areas in Nigeria. I have been in many facilities, schools, and farm. I have been in many great oil producing communities in the Delta, in Kebbi, Enugu, Rivers, Plateau and Ondo; and in other states of the federation, listening to the diverse experiences of our people. I have visited our troops in the Northeast and our brothers and sisters in IDP camps. I have felt that the pains of anguish of victims of violent terrorist attacks, flooding, fire and other obstacles. I have been in the homes of many ordinary Nigerians in various parts of the country. I have sat with our tech experts in Lagos, Edo, and Kaduna with our Nollywood and Kannywood actors, with our musicians from Lagos, Onitsha, and Kano. And I have spoken to small and large businesses.

And I stand where they stood and sat where they sat, I know their hopes and aspirations are the seeds for the great Nigeria that we all desire. This is why I am today, with utmost humility, declare



my intentions to run for the office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the platform of our great party, The All-Progressives Congress, APC. If by the grace of God and the will of the people, I am given the opportunity, then I believe that first, we must complete what we have started, radically trusting our security, intelligence and architecture; completing the reform of our justice system focusing on welfare and judicial personnel, enhancing justice for all the observance for the rule of law rapidly advancing our infrastructure, especially power, roads, railways and airport connectivity. For an excellent environment for business to thrive, taking the agriculture revolution to the next level especially mechanization and developing the farm to the table value chain.

Making sure that the government, its agencies regulatory service, the business community, creating a technology economy that will provide jobs for millions, enhancing our sound investment programs to a full-scale sound welfare scheme, completing the promise of Nigerians out of poverty within a decade. Completing the task necessary for all Nigerians.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Analysis of Word Classes

Nouns		Pronouns		Articles		Verbs		Adverbs		Adjectives		Conj.		Dem.				
No.	%	No.	%	Def.	Indef.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
99	19.3	25	4.8	No	%	No	%	34	6.6	3	0.5	12	2.3	16	3.1	2	0.3	
				7	1.3	34	6.6											
				7 + 34 = 41 = 7.9%														

The campaign speech by Yemi Osinbajo begins with a *formulaic expression*, as do all political discourse: ‘Dear Nigerians’. This is designed to capture the affection of Nigerians and to endear them to him. Next, we observed the use of *vague and imprecise expressions* as in: ‘for the past *several* years’, and ‘in this period of *several* years...’, ‘I have served the nation in *several capacities* at the electives of Mister President represented our country in *several* high-level international engagements’ again as do all political speeches intended to mislead the target audience. The use of articles on Table 1 highlights this vagueness, notice that the speech uses only 7 definite articles, which is about 1.3% of the total word use. Definite articles have definite referents, while the speech made use of 34 indefinite articles, about 6.6% of the total word use in the speech. This is the source of vagueness that we observe in the speech.

We equally observed the Vice President trying very hard in this speech to leverage on the achievements of the President, Muhammadu Buhari, using expressions such as: ‘*I* have served as vice president under a true Nigerian patriot, a servant of the nation. He was of peace, and a man of integrity’. ‘*I* have been in many facilities, schools and farms.’ ‘*I* have been...’ ‘*I* have visited...’ ‘*I* have felt...’, ‘*I* stand...’, ‘*I* know...’, ‘*I* am today...’, ‘*I* am given...’, ‘*I* believe...’ Secondly, we also observed the use of the *collective and possessive pronouns*: ‘*we*’ and ‘*our*’ as in ‘*we* have together worked through some of the most difficult times in the history of our nation, but *we* have remained focused on securing the country, providing infrastructure, and growing *our* economy... *our* tenure will end next year.’ ‘*We* must complete what *we* have started...’ for the same purpose of leveraging on the achievements of the president. Table 1 evinces that this speech uses 25



pronouns a colossal 4.8% of the total words used in this speech. We noted a drift from the specific to the general, from 'I' to 'us.'

Next, we turn to the use of *nouns* in this speech. On Table 1, nouns occur 99 times which is about 19.26% of the total 514 words employed in the speech. Very outstanding is the use of *noun clusters* indicating mentioned things, as in: '...oil producing communities in the Delta, in Kebbi, Enugu, Borno, Rivers, and Ondo.' Secondly, in '...radically trusting our security, intelligence, and architecture; completing the reform of our justice system focusing on welfare and judicial personnel, enhancing justice for all the observance for the rule of law rapidly advancing our infrastructure, especially power, roads, railways, and airport connectivity. ...an excellent environment ...taking agriculture revolution to the next level especially mechanization and developing the farm to the table value chain.' This enhances description of things and places, invoking visual images that aids understanding.

The use of *verbs* is equally worthy of note for linking and connectivity, on Table 1, 34 verbs are used, approximately 6.6% of the total number of words. We observed the use of progressive verbs as in: 'growing our economy', 'producing...', 'trusting...', 'focusing...', 'enhancing...', 'taking...', and developing. But, of particular importance is the use of stative verbs by the speaker to denote or suggests inactivity, as in: 'listening to the diverse experiences of our people.', 'I have sat...', 'I have spoken...'

As the Table 1 reveals, there are 3 adverbs, making up 0.3% of the word use in the speech. Of this three, two are adverbs of degree, while one is an adverb of time. The use of adverbs is of utmost importance in this speech. Notice how they engender exaggeration in such expressions as 'rapidly advancing our infrastructure', 'radically trusting our security, intelligence, and architecture...', 'taking the agriculture revolution to the next level especially....' The next set of adverbs are time adverbs such as 'therefore I am today, with utmost humility...'. Talking of exaggeration, the expression 'completing the promise of taking Nigerians out of poverty within a decade', and 'creating a tech economy that will provide jobs for millions' are the most outstanding, a propaganda intended to lure Nigerians into something un-accomplishable. What image comes to the readers mind when one hears the expression 'next level', nothing. A good example of false and pretentious diction.

We now turn to the use of adjectives in the speech. There are 12 adjectives in all, which is about 2.3% of the entire words employed in the speech. Most of the adjectives are superlative, specifying nouns making them clearer to understand. For instance, in the expression 'excellent environment for business to thrive', '...felt the pains of anguish of victims of violent terrorist attacks...'. The expression 'I have been in the house of many *ordinary* Nigerians' implies that some Nigerians are special. There are 16 conjunctions in the entire speech, this is 3.1% of the total word used in this piece of writing. It is these conjunctions that knit the entire writing together, giving it its organic texture. They link paragraphs, connect sentences, and bind ideas. An example of the use of coordinate conjunction is evident in the expression 'and I stand where they stood and sat where they sat...', '...Nollywood and Kannywood', 'and I have spoken to ...'.

The use of distal and proximal demonstrative pronouns is very instructive in this speech. Study these two expressions 'in this period...' and 'this is why' speak of time and reason, giving the



writing its present urgency. The superordinate tense used in this speech is the present progressive, suggestive of ongoing Ness, in our words, this will be a continuation of Buhari's regime. We now turn to the analysis of functional categories, as evinced on Table 2.

Table 2: Analysis of Functional Categories

Punctuations			Paragraph				
Types	Number	%	Words		Sentences		
			Number	%	Types	Number	%
Comma	29	55	P1=79	15	Simple Sentences	7	33
Semicolon	1	2	P2=171	33	Compound Sentences	5	23.8
Full stop	22	43	P2=28	5	Complex Sentences	4	19
			P4=37	7	Comp-compl. Sentences	3	14.2
			P5=100	19.4	Multiple Sentences	2	9.5
			P6-99	19.2			
			514	100		21	100

Table 2 reveals the use of functional categories such as sentences, their structures, and functions. There are 21 sentences in the speech, 7 are simple which is about 33.3% functioning as assertives, and declaratives.

Assertive: 'As stipulated by the Nigerian constitution, our tenure will end next year.'

Declarative: 'I have been in many facilities, schools, and farm.'

Next are the compound sentences, they are 5 in the speech, which is about 23.8%. They are mostly expository, narrative, and descriptive in function.

Narrative: 'Making sure that the government, its agencies regulatory service, the business community, creating a tech economy that will provide jobs for millions, enhancing our investment programs to a full-scale sound welfare scheme.'

Descriptive: 'He was a man of peace, and a man of integrity, Mohammadu Buhari.'

The complex sentences are 4 in the speech, which is 19% of all the sentences. The compound complex sentences are 3 in all about 14.2%. It is in the complex sentences that the key ideas of the speech are transmitted, while in the compound complex sentences, the speaker struggles to explain



his experiences as vice president and makes his claim for election to the office of the president. Finally, there are 2 multiple sentences, about 9.5% of the total number of sentences.

The speaker uses punctuations rather than conjunctions to achieve cohesion and coherence. Therefore, there are plethora of commas, 29 about 55% in this political discourse. He uses full stops, 22 of it, about 43% to end every completed thought. The choice of words in the speech is varied giving vent to very lucid style of writing. On Table 2, paragraph one has 79 words, 15% of the total words used in the speech; paragraph two contains 171 words, about 33% of the total words; paragraph three has 28 words about 5.2%; paragraph four has 37 words which is 7%; whereas paragraph five has 100 words about 19.4%; finally, paragraph six has 99 words, about 19.2%. Therefore, the paragraphs are not of the same length, while paragraphs four and five are very long, paragraphs one, two, and three are very short.

Data Set 2: Adam Oshiomole

My people, according to Pastor's statement to EFCC, he took the N700m Dasuki fund to their leader's house and they shared it in line with the principle of PDP which is 'share the money'. Now EFCC is asking him to narrate who and who did you share to, he said 'oh we gave various local government', they are singing how they shared government's money for defense exactly same way as local witches used to sing at midnight when there was no light in the villages.

Do you know why he wants to be a governor? Mr Ize Iyamu wants to be a governor to get immunity to protect him from persecution. Today, we ask EFCC why Ize Iyamu having confessed to money is collected for defense from Fidelity Bank, having confessed to taking it for purposes other than defense and directing how he shared it, he must face the music that Dasuki and the others are facing. Even their leader wrote in his handwriting that he collected N300 million from NSA.

Do you want to hand over Edo treasury to a thief? I'm a proud Kukuruku man, not the son of a cook, but we don't take money meant for soldiers, money meant for defense to secure Christians appealing to power for level-playing field. I wonder I thought they would decree that there is no vacancy. Things have changed and things will continue to change. I'm the governor today and I have all the records, I advise them to be quiet.

Data Analysis

The style of Adams Oshiomole is very different from what we encounter in the speech by Yemi Osinbajo. To begin with, Oshiomole uses *sarcastic expressions*, evinced in 'according to pastor's statement to EFCC, he took the N700m Dasuki fund to their leader's house and they shared it in line with the principle of PDP which is 'share the money.' First, one wonders what pastor has got to do with political money and EFCC. Secondly, why the emphasis on the word 'pastor'.

He employs *local parlance*, as in '... they are singing how they shared government's money for defense the same way as *local witches* used to sing at midnight when there was *no light* in the villages.' 'I'm a proud *Kukuruku man*, not the son of a cook,...we don't take money meant for soldiers...'. In this speech, the speaker uses *rhetorical questions*, as in example (a) and (b) and



parallelisms, as in example (c) to move the narrative forward, which did not occur in the speeches by Yemi Osinbajo, as in the following examples:

- a. Do you know why he wants to be a governor?
- b. Do you want to hand over Edo treasury to a thief?
- c. I'm the governor today and I have all the records, I advise them to be quiet.

We observed the use of the present progressive tense, the use of the personal pronouns, contrast, and coordinating conjunctions, we have demonstrated these in the analysis of Yemi Osinbajo's speech, therefore, we will not repeat them here.

Data Set 3: Adam Oshionole

We are liable if we say anything that is libelous, I take responsibility in my personal capacity. I wave my immunity, I set my immunity aside and I declare as follows before God that the other guy - Mr. Ize Iyamu has a very interesting lifestyle. Now because of crisis of identity, he went and carried a Bible and said he is a pastor and born again. His work experience, first job PA to who? Lucky Igbenedion, second job, chief of staff to who? Lucky Igbenedion. Third job Secretary to Edo State Government to who? Lucky Igbenedion. After his tenure, he retired and started building his private home. Yesterday, he wrote who could not even though in Uromi with PDP government made Ize Iyamu as secretary to government they did not build schools, they did not build roads, they didn't build anything, and he now said that he cannot be blamed for the failure of Igbenedion's Government. Now there are two issues, so he agreed that the government failed. Correct! The only thing he is saying is that he cannot be blamed. If we will not blame him for the failure of the government, he was chief of staff and secretary to the government would that be the reason to promote him to the office of Governor? Now what is the truth? He went on to say that he has never been indicted in his life and that he made his first million while he was either 21 or 31.

Data Analysis

This speech opens with 'we are liable ...' suggesting that the speaker is conscious of the legal implications of a libelous utterance. He pursues the argument further by taking responsibility for his expressions and stripes himself of immunity. Listen to him:

I take responsibility in my personal capacity,

I wave my immunity, I set my immunity aside....

We observed further that this speech that opens with the plural personal pronoun 'we' diffuses into 'I', suggesting a movement from the general to the specific. Ngulube (9) claims that 'the collective bargaining consciousness lacks personal responsibility' and that is what we noted here, the speaker is not willing to be accountable personally here, even if he states otherwise.

Next, we observed an allusion to the holy book, listen to him, 'He went and carried a bible and said he is a pastor and a born again.' In this multiple sentence structure, Oshiomole establishes the fake conversion of Mr. Ize Iyamu. The speech also employs a plethora of questions and answers as a technique of moving the narrative forward. This technique is used to query the work



experience of his opponent and to link him with a previous failed governance in the state. ... First job PA to who? Lucky Igbinedion. Second job chief of staff to who? Lucky Igbinedion. Third job secretary to Edo State Government, to who? Lucky Igbinedion. Having established the series of job descriptions, he went ahead to point out the failures of that administration:

They didn't build schools,

They didn't build roads,

They didn't build anything.

Note again the resurgence of the use of multiple sentence structure to express the series of repetitions, the sentence structure of S + AUX +V + O in a parallel formation. Particularly striking is the effect on the target audience of the repetition of the negative assertives. This speech by Adams Oshiomole uses sound inductive logic powerfully; examine the following utterance. 'He now said that he cannot be blamed for the failure of Igbinedion's Government. Now there are two issues [here] so he agreed that the government failed. Correct! The only thing he is saying is that he cannot be blamed [for it]. If we will not blame him for the failure of the government, he was chief of staff and secretary to the government would that be the reason to promote him to the office of the governor?'

With this master stroke of argument, Oshiomole dismisses Mr. Ize Iyamu's claim to good governance by the technique of association. You work with a failure; therefore, you have failed.

Data Set 4: Nyesom Wike

We are going to vote for the unity of Nigeria. We are going to vote for equity, fairness, and justice. And that is why I salute the APC Governorship who came out to say, for this country to be united, for this country to move on as one, that there is need for power to shift.

We are going to vote for people who have the interest for our state. Time has passed that you tell me that Rivers state only produces so and so number of votes. I have no problem about that in return, what have we gotten? So, you must tell River's people now, if we vote for you, this is what you'll have. Politics is you do for me; I'll do for you. If you push me, I'll push you. If you love, I will love you.

From ward to ward in our local government, they will tell you what we have decided. If you want me to survive politically, follow the way we are going. We will not support those who say when they come to power, they will kill me. We will not support those who say when they come to power, they will jail me. Will you allow them to kill me? Will you vote for those who do not want us to exist? Are you sure? We are going to vote for people who have the interest of our state. Time has passed when you will the unity of this country.

Data Analysis

This speech commenced by stating its goals, this is unlike most political speeches, which start with a formulaic expression.



We are going to vote for the unity of Nigeria.

We are going to vote for equity, fairness, and justice.

There is need for power to shift.

We are going to vote the people who have the interest of our state.

We need to get something in return for our votes.

In this speech, we observe effective repetition of patterns, such as the 'we' pronouns, simple sentence structure, and word choice. The adjectives are put together in a way that is effective and communicative, examine 'unity, equity, fairness, justice'. With the use of political slogan 'power must shift... the interest of our state,... something in return for our votes'.

Secondly, the speech writer tells us in an expository sentence what politics is for and/or about.

Politics is you do for me; I'll do for you.

If you push me, I'll push you.

If you love me, I love you.

Consider the clusters of ifs in the speech, suggesting that voting in politics is condition on the promised returns. We see the use of parallel sentence structures, if-conditional expressions, a contrast between 'me' and 'you'. Thirdly, the speaker goes emotional about political survival, suggesting that in Nigeria, politics is a do or die affair.

If you want me to survive politically, follow the way we are going.

We will not support those who say when they come to power, they will kill me.

We will not support those who say when they come to power, they will jail me.

These complex sentences are used to state reasons for voting for certain individuals and not for others. The negative assertives 'we will not support...' is very forceful and effective. The style is lucid and very clear, Wike style. Finally, we observe a series of rhetorical questions:

Will you allow them to kill me?

Will you vote for those who don't want us to exist?

Are you sure?

Wike's deployment of these rhetorical questions above are stylistically very effective as he uses such devices to provoke thought on the part of the audience to make them see why they must reject their opponents.



DISCUSSION

Politics at all levels is said to involve negotiations and bargaining (Chilton 4). Contestants adopt all forms of propaganda to rally people around them by working on the electorates 'hearts and minds' (Reagan 44). These propaganda techniques are same as those used in electioneering campaign in Nigeria in the period under review that is between 2013 – 2023. Political language by political players is used to cajole the electorates to support and champion their political interests with votes. Politicians are affected by language. As Humes puts it, 'utterances at the top influences people below'. Language is used in speech performance, such as adverts. The language of political campaign that uses flamboyant rhetoric is persuasive, what is often called the Machiavelli strategy, to get to and remain in power. The different ways politicians use language during electioneering campaigns are via exaggerations, rhetorical questions, word coinages, slogans, attack on party logos, and so on as we saw in some of the speeches analyzed above.

Starting with the first speech, Yemi Osinbajo manipulates the people with fantastic choice of words, making his speech widely applauded by many Nigerians including those who are against his presidential ambition. Saboboxie claims that this strategy of using vital high sounding 'glad words' are described as glistening generalities that cannot be verified. This glorified speech makes Nigerians less critical of complex issues battling their lives. Like someone jokingly observed, if the masterful use of words could win elections, Osinbajo would have won the presidential APC election because he delivered a campaign speech that raised the hopes of the delegates across Nigeria in a manner that the hypnotism of the words of Osinbajo made the people less concerned with how he intended to achieve all his campaign promises.

Osinbajo's speech is one of the hall marks of politicians playing politics with words, as good politicians always do. Humes, a renowned presidential speech writer once said, 'the act of communication is the way to leadership.' The masterful way with words can sway the electorate to be less focused on important matters. It is a manipulating strategy to distract listeners with very glad words, emphasis and oversimplifying complex matters.

Plain folk device is another strategy used extensively by politicians. Osinbajo uses this device to a good advantage, as a politician just like others with common virtues and vices. Thus, a leader may embrace a child in the slum area or take his lunch sitting with slum dwellers on a mat to impress upon them that he is one of them.

Adams Oshiomole uses the technique of association or band wagon effect to project positive or negative qualities, be it praise or blame of a person, object, or value, on to another to make the latter either more acceptable or less palatable. He is a master of name calling and ethnic profiling in form of attack and violence, abuse of fundamental human right and inducement; a technique often used by politicians. When politicians are stereotypical of any individual or a political group, their agenda mostly promotes an awful perception of their opponents to arouse public rejection. In the speeches accredited to him, he uses simple and "raw" terminologies to label or give a negative description of Mr. Ize Iyamu.

We also observed the use of vague and abusive utterances as well as rhetorical questions. It is a characteristic of political discourse to make use of vague or indefinite words that have no realistic



ways of validating them, like rumour, they lack verifiability. The abusive language is used to discredit opponents. Of course, in some instances, abusive utterances are used out of desperation to defame the character of Pastor Ize Iyamu, at other times, they are used unconsciously. As the politician's cross carpet, such campaign speeches are used against them as in subsequent elections. A case in point is Governor Obaseki and Adams Oshiomole in Edo State. As pointed out earlier, the same manipulative strategy of "least evil propaganda" was used in 2023 to project Mr. Peter Obi's presidential ambition to Nigerians. The narrative pushed to the electorates was that Mr. Peter Obi was a "lesser evil" when compared with other presidential candidates who have been described as "corrupt old folks" or "money bag" politicians. This prompted the popular film maker Okon Ime Bishop to describe Peter Obi as a lesser evil and not a saint".

CONCLUSION

We conclude that the speeches are of very high quality. The messages are very successfully communicated. The word choices are appropriate. We propose that when a politician delivers these sorts of campaign speeches, the goal is to draw the audience to them and convince them of why they are the better candidates for the election. To achieve this, politicians use their words in subtle and careful ways that capture the attention, interest, and admiration of the listeners. These extracts employ words and varying sentence structures. The sentences employ the pronoun system – 'I', 'we', 'you', 'your' to deliberately make the audience believe the speech is about them. 'We' entails togetherness – could be of ideas, opinions, desires, and comradeship.

The speakers use rhetoric and vague phrases and indiscriminate use of political and technical terms. The use of words like mandate, govern, tenure, revalidation, consolidate, among others, and phrases like 'modest gains' and 'keep faith'. The phrase 'modest gains' does not exactly tell us what the speaker has accomplished.

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