

PDF - A LINGUISTIC-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE OF NIGERIAN POLITICAL ELITES -
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This Western philosopher held this view about man being a political animal because he (man) is one animal that tries to order his social arrangement according to his sense of understanding and rational argument about the justice of those arrangements.

Virtually all Western philosophers that came after Aristotle's works; Alexander the Great, Avicenna, Averroes, Maimonides, Albertus, Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas, Duus Scotus, Ptolemy, Copernicus, Galileo, Martha Nussbawn and host of others also famously stated that man is by "nature" a political animal.

Human nature refers to the distinguishing characteristics, including ways of thinking, feeling and acting that human beings tend to have naturally.

The questions of what these characteristics are, what causes them and how this causation works and how fixed human nature is are amongst the oldest and most important questions in Western philosophy.

These questions particularly have important implications in ethics, politics and theology. This is partly because human nature can be regarded as both a source of norms of conduct or ways of life, as well as presenting obstacles or constraints on living a good life.

The complex implications of such questions are, therefore, dealt with in politics most especially, while the multiple branches of the humanities altogether form an important domain of inquiry into human nature and the question of what it means to be human.

Having known the rationale behind humans' nature and its connection with politics, it is not surprising, therefore, for us to dig deeply into the lives of politicians, their use of language and of course, the linguistic stylistic analysis of some of their utterances, especially, here in Nigeria. There is a strong need for us to study the lexis and structure of the politicians' expressions, especially how they create a certain world view. No doubt, the electorates are usually influenced by politicians' syntactic arrangement and so, this research work analyses their words and expressions in order to identify when the politicians want to subvert or obscure issues, evade questions or arouse emotion.

This research work also intends to bring out or study 'pragmatism' in the language of politics. Pragmatism simply refers to the deep structure meaning or better still, the meaning of what is said by a politician.

The focus of recognition of political language is another area of interest. That is, which part of the speech does the speaker lay emphasis on (that is, foregrounding). Here, the lexis and structure are connected to the audience, purpose and context (context is the environment, circumstance or situation in which an utterance is made). That is, is the utterance made at a naming ceremony, birthday party, campaign ground, etc.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In all contemporary societies, politicians are always known to have their ways with the electorates since they (politicians), usually create certain world view for themselves through their lexis and structure as explained earlier.

A skilful politician usually uses his communicative skills to get some patronage. According to **Yusuf (2010)**, politician combines all the traits and tactics of other professionals and conglomeration of registers of other disciplines in his bid to get the people to his side.

Whenever it suits him to be a philosopher, he instantly turns one. If the setting demands he should behave

like a clergyman, he metamorphoses into one. An average politician uses persuasive words to cajole the electorates since he wants to campaign for himself and his party, wants to sell his party manifestos, wants to win an election, wants second term, etc. So, like an aggressive salesman, a fanatical cleric and an experienced psychologist, he deploys all his communicative arsenal towards his goal of persuasion. Consequently, an average politician behaves or uses language according to how he finds his setting. Thus, if he is in the midst of certain class of people, he speaks like them; he uses their diction and vocabulary. This, of course, is to enable him strike some affinity with them. Because of all the aforementioned tactics, however, the electorates are easily deceived and taken for fools since he (politician) has succeeded in arousing their interest and feelings.

This research, therefore, intends to examine and expose some, if not all the politicians' tactics, so that poor, innocent electorates will no longer fall into their traps and stop being preys to some heartless and self-centred politicians. This will be wonderfully achieved through the linguistic stylistic analysis of their (politicians) expressions.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The aim and objective of this study is to examine and expose implicit statements in the language of politics and to detect examples of linguistic strategies that impose moral or ethical values on people. This study also aims at looking into how politicians always attempt to communicate leadership and obtain credit with the use of language in political contexts and their way of appealing to attitudes and emotions that are already within the listeners.

In addition to all the above, this study will also showcase how perceptions, convictions and identities are influenced by politicians use of language. In other words, how electoral candidates through their speeches always try to accomplish or persuade an audience to support their political opinions and how their paragraphs, dictions, figures of speech, etc., are selectively picked in order to conceal meaning. And more specifically, how they use language to make the audience agree or conform with their ideologies.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The urge to put up a thesis on this topic was born or prompted out of the awareness of the ignorance of the populace on the politicians' use of language or rhetorics.

It has been noted that a large number of the electorates get carried away by the persuasive but insincere language of our politicians. So, this study will serve as an eye opener not only to the electorates but also to linguists and the entire populace.

As for the electorates who are the main target of this study, they will be able to ascertain the truth from the politicians' linguistic choices. Again, they will be able to know or notice when they are being deceived or taken for granted. Besides, this study will help the speech writers for politicians perfect their strategies for political speech writing .

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The political elite in focus in this study are Nigerians that are educated and saddled with the task or business of political leadership and those occupying various political positions like Presidency, parastatals' head, commissioners, advisory, ambassadors and other political offices. It also embraces those that are involved in practical political practicioning and politicking either civil or military.

Nigeria, since independence has been under the tutelage of two different kinds of political regime. Each regime has always produced its own political leaders and elite.

This study, however, will not segregate or sectionalise the political elite. -The study specifically concentrates or focuses on the elite that have made significant contributions or landmarks to the building and development of Nigerian political history which cut across various regimes and governments available so far in this country, military or civilian.

The linguistic-analysis of some of the speeches made by notable Nigerian elite is another focus of this study. It is through this analysis that some of the features of political language will be weighed and examined and this, of course will bring out the true colours of some of our politicians.

Stylistics, no doubt plays a vital role in this study since stylistics is the study of text from a linguistic perspective. It is also that part of linguistics which deals with variations in the use of language. And since this study deals with the language of Nigerian political elite, stylistics is inevitable here.

Finally, political office holders are unpredictable fellows. This study, therefore, plans to expose some of their antics and intrigues. Oftentimes, what comes out of their mouths often contradicts their actions. That is why this study touches some aspect of their (elite) speeches in order to show their disparities.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In view of the large number of people this research study intends to cover, vis-à-vis the size of our country and considering the shortness and limitation of the space for this study, it thus becomes imperative to restrict the selection of the political elite to notable ones across different regimes and various geo-political zones or regions of the country. Such notables include Chief Obafemi Awolowo (South West), Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe (South East), S. G Ikoku (South East), Chief Bola Ige (South West), General Olusegun Obasanjo (South West), Alhaji Shehu Shagari (North East), General Badamosi Babangida (North Central), Mr. Tunji Braithwaite (South West) and Dr. Nwafor Oritzu-Oritzu.

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