A Theoretical Analysis of Speech Acts in Political Speeches; A Review of Governor Douye Diri's Selected Speeches

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Abstract

Speechmaking has become an essential component of political leadership and governance across the world, serving as a tool for persuasion, mobilisation, and political communication. This study critically examines the linguistic and rhetorical features of selected political speeches of Governor DouyeDiri of Bayelsa State, Nigeria, with the aim of uncovering the unique stylistic and discursive strategies embedded in his political discourse. Despite the prominence of political speech analysis in Nigeria, little attention has been given to Governor Diri's oratorical style, hence the need for this investigation. The study employs textual analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) as its methodological frameworks, focusing on the linguistic structures, rhetorical devices, and persuasive techniques used in the governor's speeches during major political events such as inaugurations, policy declarations, and state addresses. The analysis explores rhetorical tools such as metaphor, metonymy, analogy, repetition, contrastive pairs, and call to action, as well as broader communicative strategies including theatricality, ideology, aggression, and power relations in political communication. Drawing insights from speech act theory, the research further examines how Governor Diri's use of language functions not merely as a medium of communication but as a performative act that shapes perception, evokes emotion, and constructs social meaning. Findings reveal that Governor Diri's speeches are characterised by a strong use of metaphorical and rhetorical expressions that enhance persuasion, emotional appeal, and audience connection. His speeches also reflect an ideological alignment with themes of unity, progress, and social transformation, while strategically employing linguistic choices to strengthen credibility and public trust. The study underscores the interplay of power, ideology, and persuasion in political communication, illustrating how language serves as a tool for leadership legitimacy and political influence.

Keywords: Political Speech, Speech Act, Theoretical Analysis, Speech Act Theory.

Introduction

Speechmaking has become part of the practice associated with political office holders across the world. In particular, the art has been identified with the American presidency since 1789. Suffice to say that political leaders appropriately use language to pursue their political agenda (Osisanwo 2011:200). Stylistic studies have been made on political elites ranging from: Language of Political Campaigns in Nigeria; An evidence of 2007 general elections, Selected Speeches of Prominent Politicians in Adamawa State as sited in International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science volume six, Discursive Strategies in Political Speech: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Inaugural Speeches of the 2015 Nigeria's Gubernatorial Inaugurals as sited in volume three of the European Journal of English Language, Linguistics and Literature.

While political speeches are crucial communication tools, no detailed critical discourse analysis of Governor DouyeDiri of Bayelsa State has been done. This gap is what this research addresses, bringing to bear the unique linguistic imports, language of persuasion, the power of rhetoric, as well as metaphorical choices notable in Governor Diri's speeches, while exploring his political beliefs in his language use, evaluating their effectiveness in influencing public opinion and shaping political discourse.

To ensure a focused examination, this study analyses a specific selection of political speeches delivered by Governor Diri. The speeches primarily include those delivered during key political events, such as inauguration speeches, policy announcements, state addresses etcetera. The analysis is limited to the textual level, considering linguistic features, rhetorical devices and discursive strategies that enhance the persuasive impact of speeches.

The study on Governor Douye Diri's political speeches holds very profound significance with a particular focus on their positive impact in the fields of academia, politics, and education in its broader context. Through an exploration of Governor Diri's rhetorical strategies, discursive strategies, and the socio-political implications of his speeches, this research clarifies the transformative potential of his oratorical skills.

Firstly, understanding the significance of Governor Douye Diri's political speeches necessitates an examination of their relevance to the academic sphere. Political speeches are essential tools for communication, mobilisation, and persuasion in the realm of politics. Leadership style is performed through the cumulative interaction of nonverbal modes. By analysing his speeches, we gain insights into his leadership style, political agenda, and the strategies he employs to influence public opinion and create mutual understanding and followers. By critically analysing the content, structure, and persuasive techniques employed within his speeches, we gain insights into their educational value. This research contributes to the development of rhetorical studies within academia, providing scholars with a valuable resource for the analysis and appreciation of political oratory.

Secondly, this study serves as a benchmark for future investigations into the rhetorical strategies employed by politicians, aiding in the refinement of public speaking skills and fostering a deeper understanding of effective communication in the political arena.

These speeches serve as powerful tools in shaping public opinion, garnering support, and mobilising political action. By studying the themes, framing, and delivery techniques employed by Governor Diri, this research sheds light on the strategic communication tactics utilised within the political realm. It offers valuable insights to political analysts, campaign strategists, and policymakers, enabling them to better comprehend the dynamics of public discourse and adapt their strategies accordingly, as well as foster the understanding of the persuasive strategies employed in the speeches, bringing more insight into their communicative techniques and expertise and how they shape public opinion. Through this analysis, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the role that political speeches play in influencing democratic processes and transforming political narratives.

Textual Analysis

According to Brown (2015), textual analysis is widely applied in the area of communication as it is a holistic discipline approach that cuts across various disciplines related to social sciences and humanities. The scholar went on to comment on the methodologies of textual analysis, emphasising its ability to integrate variations that delve into more specific techniques within the related field, such as content analysis, semiotics, interactional analysis, and rhetoric criticism. According to Fairclough (2015), the origin of textual analysis can be seen in the Greek myth of Hermes, the mythological God. In his

exploration, when Hermes was saddled with the significant role of transmitting messages from the gods to artificial mortals, he had to initially interpret the divine texts and later translate and elucidate their meaning in a language easy to comprehend by ordinary humans.

Textual analysis encompasses a wide understanding of language and symbols contained in texts to obtain insights concerning how readers understand the text. Textual analysis aims to understand the meaning or natural meaning present in the text. Textual analysis is a fundamental tool employed by various researchers to obtain insights into how people understand or see the world. It serves as a method, a process for obtaining information, especially for readers seeking to understand how individual of various cultures and subcultures sees their identity and their position in the world (Alan, 2012). In addition, Aneri (2020) posited that when discussing textual analysis, we take into account the possibility surrounding the most appropriate understanding of a given context.

Omozuwa (2013) provided insight into the intended purpose of textual analysis. He submitted that the hallmark of textual analysis goes beyond revealing a definite or concealed meaning of a text; rather, the intent is to identify and recognise a wider array of potential meanings fundamental to the material analysed. Instead of trying to reveal the hidden meanings, explore the writer's subconscious intentions, or identify potential biases within the given text, we emphasised employing different techniques or perspectives. This principle provides us with a better understanding and interpretation of the analysed materials by taking into account the cultural and ideological perspectives established within a particular time. Additionally, it contributes to the text gaining widespread recognition and becoming an inherent part of human understanding. The real purpose of textual analysis goes beyond a mere examination of the text's structure or appearance; it intends to obtain the accurate meaning or message of a given text. It does not only focus on explaining or interpreting the structure of the text. Rather, it encompasses developing a dynamic structure of the text, maintaining the real context of the work and its essence. Ultimately, textual analysis does not try to reveal what constitutes the text but, instead, seeks to find out how the text was developed and disseminated.

Political Speeches

By analysing language in areas where it's all operate and modifications taken into account, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how language shapes our thoughts, norms and behaviours (Smaa, 2019). Invariably, studying languages provides a wide spectrum of opportunities in comprehending how language influences individuals' perception of the world, their norms, and their sense of reasoning. Political speeches presented to the masses during the electoral period or campaigns, politicians seek to verbalise their ideas and thoughts effectively through language (Filonenko, 2015). By so doing, they have been able to communicate and convince the listeners of the speech to buy into their idea, as well as those who may read or listen to the speech on social platforms. Politicians meticulously chose their words to enable them persuade and manipulate the masses through the use of words and expressions, either by omitting or applying them to influence the meaning of their speech from various angles.

Emphatically, political speeches are formulated by a team of proficient, skilled speech writers who are well equipped with the use of manipulative and persuasive words or language (Chudinov, 2017). This group of speechwriters improve these speeches by integrating rhetorical techniques, which can drastically affect the aftermath of the electoral proceedings. The effectiveness of a political speech is not exclusively dictated by the accuracy or truthfulness of its structure or context, but rather by the conviction and persuasiveness of the

points or arguments presented (Alkebayeva, 2014). Essentially, what this means is that the success of a political speech requires the act of persuasion and conviction rather than just providing factual claims or insights.

Rhetoric is a key feature of political speech. According to Condor (2013), eloquent speakers, particularly those who are very proficient in political speech, possess appealing attitudes and express emotional words to communicate their intended meaning to their listeners. By so doing, it makes their listeners feel compassionate and see reasons to invest in their manifesto. Invariably, at this moment, there is a sense of oneness or connection between the listeners and the agenda the speaker intends to communicate to them. In other words, by recognising and aligning with the thoughts of the listeners, the speaker has effectively verbalised his thoughts into words, thereby communicating his central message to the listeners, promoting oneness, and significantly gathering massive support from the populace. Kudelko (2019) submitted that when presenting an argument, the speaker has a duty of appealing or persuade the minds of the listeners by using emotional or rhetorical words and employing words that morally justify their propositions. Furthermore, the audience must employ their cognitive skills to understand the points of argument and why such an argument is relevant to address the issue at hand or change the governance status quo. While linguistic presentation or the mode of articulation of argument is important, responding word-for-word or in a lexical mode will appear scanty to convey an effective message that indeed requires a power point persuasion. Other variables, such as being emotionally appealing and maintaining a moral outlook in conveying a speech, also contribute significantly to ensuring that the arguments are compelling and address the immediate needs of the audience.

According to Emad (2016), in political speech, the impact of rhetorical techniques is always generated from their contribution instead of their individual use. As a result, it is an imperative necessity to investigate how different technique communicates with each other as it is designed to interpret them separately. Simply put, understanding how numerous rhetorical devices synergise can provide qualitative information on the entire influence of the persuasive nature of political speech. Jones and Wareing (1999) asserted that the ability to effectively communicate the intended message of both the speaker and the audience aspire the same result is essential in the course of developing a concept or an ideology. In essence, when a speaker effectively communicates its intended message as desired by the listeners, it therefore holds a considerable influence on the formation and acknowledgement of a particular concept or idea. To instil a sense of connection and harmony between themselves and their listeners, politicians oftentimes employ symbols that convey and facilitate the need for national unity. By integrating these symbols, a politician's main point of attraction is to connect with their listeners on a more intimate level and to communicate or chit-chat a sense of identity and purpose, sharing the same feeling or solidarity with the futuristic plan of the country.

Metaphor is also another instrumental technique in political speech. Adeyanju (2017) posited that metaphors are linguistic devices that apportion tangible names to non-concrete concepts. This is done by drawing patterns between objects and abstract ideas on specific attributes that one desires to have. For example, the metaphor, the sunshine of a smile, reads that a smile rouses similar feelings or emotions and mental stability just the same way sunshine does. In essence, metaphors enable individuals to have a natural comprehension of and interact fluently with abstract ideas by linking them with similar or the same object or activities. In their work, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) asserted that human beings' cognitive systems are systematically metaphorical. Metaphors are not just linguistically in nature;

rather, they have significantly impacted how we think, behave, and act. In political speech, common metaphors most often emanate from domains such as sports and warfare. In addition, political campaigns exhibit characteristics of acts of war, although instead of employing physical military actions, they basically employ strategic words that are compelling and persuasive.

Metonymy is another useful feature in political speech. Adeyanju (2011) stated that a metonymy refers to when an idea or concept is illustrated by a single word or characteristics that is likened by it. Metonymies depend on the conceptual connections between the replaced words or characteristics and the wider idea it presents. Metonymies, which are the replacement of a word or idea with another word similar to or connected to it, hold a contributive impact in political speeches to either reduce or elevate responsibility. For instance, "The White House" is an example of metonymies; instead of using the President's name, the writer removes the President's personal identity. This is because the aim has moved from the individual to the institution they stand for. Alternatively, if a leader's name is used to address the government or the citizens of the country, it elevates their personal responsibilities. This is because they have shifted the responsibility directly to the individual leader, making them more responsible for any actions of the government or the populace.

Analogies, which entail comparing present day- circumstance to historical activities or events, which are common features in political speeches, such comparison are a common characteristic of political rhetoric, frequently employed by speakers to make their argument more palatable, remarkable, addressable and relevant to their audience by deducing patterns between the present day- situations and the past situations (Peter, 2017). Ideas and concepts are designed to provide precision in an analogy by comparing them with already existing concepts (Demyankov, 2013). In other words, when ideas or concepts appear to be intricate or difficult to comprehend, they are usually employed to elucidate or provide a more straightforward answer by comparing them with other events that are assumed to be conversant or naturally comprehensible by the recipients. It therefore follows that an Analogy is a comparison between two ideas, designed for the purpose of providing clarity or precision, and in this context, it is employed as a technique to simplify and explain the ideas or concepts being raised for discussion (Kenzhekanova, 2016). Analogies are used in political speech to heighten argument, especially in circumstances where practical-life experiences or prior cases that are current or when the subject matter being discussed is a sensitive one. By drawing an analogy between the present circumstances and the same situation that is current or emotionally affected, the argument can gain a convincing result or resonance with the audience. It therefore follows that analogies stand as a rhetorical technique that creates a compelling and convincing argument by making it more persuasive for the audience.

The application of analogies was employed in a political speech, as illustrated by Martin Luther King Jr., during the Civil Rights movement. Notably, the King drew a pattern between the struggle of America and the historical subjugation undergone by the people of Hebrew in Egypt, as illustrated in the bible. By combining biblical meanings with the present-day event of racial inequality, King drafted a moral template that aimed to harmonise all Americans under one umbrella of a new national identity free of ethical segregation. Integrating biblical era and the modern-day situations, the King employed historical experiences from the bible to elaborate more on the present-day issues, thereby highlighting the totality of moral standards across different historical epochs. Ultimately, the application of analogy in the King's political speech demonstrates how they played a key role in communicating his message and appeal his emotions to the people with the sole aim of

fostering social transformation and a sense of common identity and unity among the Americans.

Three-part lists and contrastive pairs are also useful tools in political speeches. To present a compelling and persuasive speech, the speaker must have the capacity to persuade when conveying a political speech, especially when it comes to war-related issues. Simply put, such speeches must possess the ability to communicate a speech that embodies morality and rationality for it to be effective or relevant to the issue at hand. According to Jones and Wareing, they contended that the repetition of specific words within the conveyance of these political speeches can add significant value to the making of the ideas. Thereby, making the ideas contained in them appear to have a common general acceptance. Ultimately, political speeches can make the ideas contained in them appear like a well-known accepted fact.

Agonistic ability is another key feature in political speeches. The core of a political speech is made by an identifiable by an ongoing dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition party, just like a sports competition (Carter, 2019). Invariably, political speeches share the same elements with sport, such as the presence of enormity, rivalry battles, ethical standards, rules and regulations, skillful tactic and strategic navigation, presence of victory and defeat, announcement of winning or triumphant party. The competitive nature of a political speech is illustrated in activities such as election campaigns and parliamentary debates (Silvana, 2018). Aggression is considered an integral and critical feature of a political speech (Caywood, 2018). In social psychology, aggression is most commonly seen as any behaviour that is intended to harm another person who is motivated to avoid the harm (Bushman & Huesmann, 2010; DeWall, Anderson & Bushman, 2012). It can be an active or passive expression, verbal, physical, direct or even indirect, used in political speeches as a mark of intimidation or tackling pending issues.

Aggression in a political speech is closely related to the term "hierarchy" and domination of power and authority". The word "hierarchy" is derived from the Greek word which means "scared power" and is associated with words such as subordination, chains of authority or command from the ground level to the pinnacle. On the other hand, "domination of power and authority" originates from the Latin word meaning "dominating" all-encompassing expression such as "love for prevalence, popularity, dominance and leadership". In other words, the concept of aggression in political speech is interconnected with power organisation and love for control, dominance and leadership. Aggression is seen as the groundwork of domination, and domination, in turn, is an aftermath of effect of aggression (Yule, 2016). This synergy then forms a hierarchical system that interacts within human interaction, where those who possess aggression tend to control/ dominate others, establishing a system order where power is unevenly divided. In essence, what this means is that aggression propels the establishment of dominance, power and authority, which influences the hierarchical system of human relationships. The reality of hierarchy is in tandem with a rivalry battle, which includes aspiration for power, social relevance and status, and the enhancement of territorial or collective powers (Wirz, 2018). When analysing a speech made in aggression within the political settings, it is a well-known fact that dominant aggression is usually addressed to a particular political figure, who is always absent from the meeting setting, and it is basically the main point of focus for aggressive behaviour (Halmari, 2015). This entails challenging and questioning the political party directly to the crowd or a third party during political speeches and political discussions.

Verbal aggression is usually demonstrated through certain types of political speech acts. These acts of aggression are basically an act of political speech, having their key focus

on shrinking the position of the receiver. Standard speech acts of aggression in political speech include expressing intention with vocabulary of exile, categorical criterion and appeals, speech acts of excommunication (mainly seen in slogan genres) and speech acts of threat (Schiffrin, 2011). Ideological character is another key feature of political speech. The ideological aspect of political speech indicates that a system of social representation, collective knowledge, beliefs, and viewpoints that are rooted in collective norms, values and interests. These features draws pattern between political speech and military speech. War, seen as a corollary of political mechanisms through violent activities, serves as a key junction/ influence between these two concepts. Their junction is apparently seen in various fields such as military doctrine, military and political agreement, ultimatum, and peace settlement, all of which shape the perspective and actions of the war from the viewpoint of warring parties (Reynolds, 2012).

Theatricality is another instrumental feature of political speech. The idea of theatricality is that it links political speech with advertising and theatrical speech. In political speech, theatricality emerges as a result of the fact that one of the speaking parties, the audience serve as spectators rather than direct participants, paying attention to political functions similar to attending a show with an unpredictable outcome and plot. Politicians, when presenting their speech to the audience and news journalists, who are spectators, consciously or subconsciously, present a compelling and persuasive speech, with a key focus on leaving an indelible footprint on the populace (Victor, 2014). Political theatre solely depends on the virtual image of the politician to see their character. While the plot and functions of political speech are dependent on metaphorical expressions, the director's attribute is clearly seen in political function, where features of performance, such as scripted speeches, role assignments, and rehearsals, contribute significantly. Political advertising usually exaggerates information to get the attention of the audience (Perloff, 2013). Politicians uses advertisement in their speeches as it influences their image, boosts their public figure and enables them to gain massive support from their audience. In so doing, their audience is drawn into their course of action due to the compelling and intriguing nature of their presentation.

Furthermore, this type of advertising is employed in various fields of political propaganda, such as posters, presentations, public talks/speeches, debates, agitation, for instance, appeals, leaflets, banners and speeches at conferences, mega seminars (Pelclová, 2018). In addition to these, ceremonial events have an outlook of character of mass spectacles, such as inaugurations, or events held in courtesy of holidays. Within the framework of media coverage, there is a difference between rituals event and pseudo-events. Ritual events happen distinctly from media coverage and are only radiated by the media. On the contrary, pseudo-events are majorly organized by the media for quick broadcasting of information. Such events are covered by interviews, press conferences, television conversations, discussions, and debates. Although these events possess a form of communication, their dramatic presentation is largely influenced by the media team, even though a substantial part of their content is impromptu.

Thus, the media unit is another key feature of political speech as they play a role when a political debate, discussion or press conference is carried out by politicians, enabling them to win the minds of their audience. In other words, it is no longer a new fact that while political speeches have an independent feature of expression or mode of communication, it is important for them to significantly embrace the new trend of media platforms. These advanced media platforms have become a crucial and fundamental aspect of people's

everyday lives and are vital tools for politicians to attract, draw their attention or buy the minds of their audience to gain massive support votes from the audience (Pattison, 2014). Thus, political speeches must move to this new trend and invest in this new media platform, thereby integrating it into their mode of communication, political channels, to enable them to effectively convey or express their thoughts to their purpose, as well as influence the minds of the people.

The presence of power, ideology and persuasion are the very vital feature of political speeches (Parrott, 2019). The word power can be interpreted as the capacity of a person to influence or control the activities or events carried out in one's environment or circumstances. Significantly, the capacity of a person to exercise control or power over one's environment is not just dependent on or exercised by one person; to a greater extent, the parties involved both have the equal capacity to exert such influence. However, the person with little power, also known as the weaker party, may hinder the mutual connection by withdrawing or disassociating itself from the team (Musolff, 2016). This disengagement can be seen as a way by which the weaker party can exert some degree of control and autonomy on the relationship structure (Langston, 2016).

Emphatically, the use of words by politicians can be drawn parallels to a manipulative technique focused on both acquiring and upholding the support and favour of the people (Miller, 2013). Their speech is directed towards emotionally appealing and conviction, aiming to establish influence and audience rather than quick implementation or exercise of such authority. The process of emotional appealing entails persuading the minds of the audience to accept a politician's proposal/plan, or viewpoints. What this means is that conviction and formalisation can be viewed as the two end products of a spectrum or continuum, showing different levels of influence in political speech.

Clarity of message is another attribute of political speech (Chilton, 2014). A clear and concise message is vital as it ensures that the audience has a good interpretation and comprehension of the speaker's agenda, mission or stance. For clarity of agenda, politicians often employ words such as slogans, catchphrases, or sound bites to break down complex ideas for user-friendly content that connects with the minds of the audience. Accordingly, clarity of message enables politicians to convey their message effectively or express their thoughts as it enables them to convey their main objectives or priorities, and the expectations of the audience. Furthermore, it enables them to draft a clear policy proposal or effectively convey campaign manifestos, thereby strengthening their credibility and authenticity (Hogan, 2013). Developing a sound credibility system is highly significant for politicians to gain the trust and confidence of their audience. As a result, it is important for politicians to dig deep into how to improve their credibility through personal virtues such as upholding integrity, competence, and sincerity as a measure in the pursuit of a political career, as well as through proof of action, such as achievement or endorsement. In other words, when a speaker possesses the virtue or quality of credibility, it bolsters their conviction and persuasive power, ultimately making their point of argument to become more authoritative as well as get endorsement of their course of action/proposed plan by the audience (Garsten, 2016).

Repetition is a selling rhetorical technique commonly employed in political speeches by politicians to strengthen their key points, slogans or themes (Browse, 2018). Repetition of certain phrases, words, ideas, and concepts by politicians makes them have an indelible, remarkable footprint and bolsters their significant impact on the people. According to Jana (2016), repetition of words creates a sense of togetherness, harmony and coherence in their political speech, thereby underlying the speaker's main point of message and gathering

support from their cause of action. Furthermore, metaphor and imagery play an expensive role and a powerful technique for instilling a clear mental image and emotional attributes in political speeches. Politicians frequently employ metaphors to present matters that connect with the people's expectations or values, making intricate ideas or concepts naturally comprehensible, sympathetic and engaging. On the other hand, the use of imagery enables politicians to craft compelling virtual content, creating a sense of urgent attention or a state of importance that will draw the attention of their audience to focus on their main point of message and rouse their audience's minds.

Another significant feature to consider is a call to action. A call to action is a direct emotional appeal requesting the attention and massive support of the audience to endorse the candidate's proposed action/plan. A call to action is used in political speeches to rally support, to encourage massive support vote and promote local-level participation. According to Salkie (2015), a compelling call to action evokes the minds of the audience to resonate with the speaker's message and get involved in the political process, either through voting, volunteering or advocacy. A good political pitch speech facilitates easy adaptation by the audience (Jones, 2019). It creates a system that enables the speaker to connect with the values, expectations, and beliefs of the people. Politicians embrace a sympathetic message, tone and rhetoric technique to appeal to various demographic groups, cultural settings and constituencies. Understanding and adapting to the minds and expectations of the audience enables politicians to network with the people, build trust and confidence, and establish a user-friendly environment with different groups of stakeholders.

Importantly, the organisation and structure of a political speech is fundamental for pitching ideas clearly and directing the audience to focus on the speaker's key point of argument or presentation (Gibbs, 2013). A standard structure of a political speech entails drafting a hook introduction that will draw the attention of the audience, a body format that outlines the key point of the argument, and a conclusive remark to summarise the speech and create an indelible footprint. According to Charteris (2015), well-articulated speeches flow logically from the top to the bottom, maintaining a sequential flow of the audience's expectations, centre of attraction, throughout the presentation.

Furthermore, timing and delivery play a significant role in the effectiveness of a political speech, thereby determining how the message is received and analysed by the audience. Politicians must be cognizant of these factors, such as pacing, tone, volume, and body language, to resonate with the audience and ensure effective conveyance of transparency, trust and originality (Lena, 2019). Ultimately, mastering these features enables these politicians to effectively convey or express their ideas, network with the people, and impact the course of political speech and decision-making processes.

Speech Act Theory

Within the context of the philosophy of language, speech act theory meticulously aims to methodically elucidate the modus operandi of language (Napoleon, 2018). Its vast impact has exceeded the limits of the philosophy discipline, as it is actively considered as one of the effective theories drawing significant attention in the field of linguistics and communication. According to Elbah (2022), speech act theory is a linguistic theory found within the realm of the philosophy of language. It delves into the practical aspect of language, focusing on what speakers do with their words instead of looking at what they say. Political speeches are not all about communicating information; they include carrying out certain actions, such as assuring commitment, issuing decrees and orders, and expressing thoughts or ideas. Analysing speech acts in political speech helps to reveal the real influence of the words

spoken (Rafayel, 2021). For instance, a politician may decide to use a declarative word to make an order, use persuasive words to influence the minds of the people or use expressive words to connect emotionally with the audience.

While the application of stylistic theories to political speeches provides profound insights, there are various issues and challenges associated with this concept. Some of these theoretical issues and challenges include:

Analysing stylistic study entails interpretation, and diverse analysts may interpret the same text in different contexts (Lincoln, 2017). This subjectivity can result in diverse conclusions regarding the stylistic selection made by politicians. According to Turner (2014), setting up a uniform system of analysis and mitigating bias can be intricate. As a result, analysts must be conscious of their actions and must aim to attain objectivity in their interpretations.

The effectiveness of specific stylistic devices is greatly determined by the cultural and political setting in which they are employed. What works effectively in one cultural or political environment may not have the same result in another (Adejare, 2015). Consequently, analysts need to take note of the particular context in which a speech is said or spoken. According to Halliday (2016), they must be meticulous to avoid making sweeping statements that might not be applicable in diverse scenarios. The scholar highlighted the importance of taking note of the context usage and recognised that generalisations may not be universally accepted or acknowledged in all situations.

Generally, speakers may have an actual meaning behind their stylistic selection, but the listeners may misinterpret this selection differently. Perceived meaning is greatly determined by the listener's background, conception and biases (Mufutau, 2021). Differentiating between the actual and perceived meaning demands an in-depth understanding of the speaker's actual meaning and an awareness of the significant diversity in listener interpretation.

Language is something that is constantly evolving; it is not static or fixed, and the meaning of specific stylistic selections can change over time (Finch, 2015). Also, emerging language patterns may arise to challenge the conventional stylistic analysis. The fact that language has a divisive impact, which can result in separation when used to communicate a message that has the tendency to divide a group of individuals. In other words, language has the capacity to promote relationships and create separation based on the dynamic of the message conveyed (Freeman, 2016).

Political speeches are identified as having a mixed-form communication which includes not only verbal words but also non-verbal reactions, kind words and pictorial elements. Conventional stylistic theories may not fully dictate the intricacies of mixed-form communication, which seems to be problematic (Silvana, 2017). Integrating mixed-form communication analysis into stylistic methods demands a more holistic framework.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

A critical empirical review of previous literature is essential for better comprehension of the existing literature and research environment on a particular topic. Such reviews provide background information for new research, providing details about the research methodologies, findings and gaps in the literature.

Ogunmuyiwa (2015), in his work on "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Corruption in Presidential Speeches", studied aspects of speeches of Nigerian presidents that reveal their interpretation of corruption from a linguistic point of view. He opined that the speeches of past Nigerian presidents under study revealed their commitment to fighting corruption. He

concluded that they could be cleared of all corruption charges through a close study of their use of language. His research is similar to the present research because both research works used the theory of CDA.

Another researcher, Olajoke (2019), in his work, demonstrated the approach of language stylistics in examining political speech, especially post-appeal court accolades speeches presented by the approved Governors in Nigeria. The study aimed at identifying and evaluating significant linguistic features, accompanying these features with the speech messages and describing how language elements differentiate victory speeches as a unique stylistic genre. Findings from these studies reveal that the influential syntactic feature recognised involves the structural arrangement, standing as the governor's alternative way to convey their messages and highlighting the themes of their speeches. The study concluded that the recognised characteristics were basically employed by the governors to communicate their messages and make their intentions known to the people. Similarly, Esther (2023) investigated to find out how the English language has been used by the 2023 presidential candidate in Nigeria. The study was aimed at evaluating the approval and speech conveyed by the endorsed presidential candidates- Ahmed Tinubu of All Progressive Congress (APC), Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), and Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP). The researcher employed the theory of cohesion in analysing its theoretical framework. This theory was aimed at comparing how these three applicants employed the English language in their speech delivery to persuade their audience and to find out how these cohesive techniques were used to guarantee the masses that their multifaceted challenges would be addressed. Findings from the study reveal that syntactic connections used in the texts were internally implemented and comprehended, which enabled the speaker to accomplish both registered and general coherence. In essence, the application of textual stylistic study on politics is a subject of discussion.

Conclusive Remarks

Political speeches serve as a fundamental avenue for expressing ideas, influencing public opinion and shaping policy decisions. However, a cursory look at textual stylistic study indicates various pressing challenges that demand attention. A common problem is the widespread ambiguity in political speeches. Speakers tend to use unclear wording, giving no chance for different interpretations. This ambiguity can result in misconceptions and chaos among the audience, thwarting the importance of clarity and precision required for good communication. Also, the use of deceptive words in political speech raises ethical considerations. A significant problem is the absence of transparency in certain political speeches. The inability to provide honest and clear details can hinder the true nature of the issues at hand, thereby keeping the audience in the dark when faced with difficult situations.

In essence, a critical evaluation of textual stylistic features in political speeches uncovers a landscape filled with ambiguity, deceptive devices, and the absence of transparency and overuse of rhetorical techniques. Addressing these issues is essential for improving the effectiveness of political communication and promoting a friendly and positive engagement with the people.

Recommendation

There is also an expansion in the study of metaphor in political communication to include digital platforms and social media. Considering the intensity of online discourse in shaping public opinions and mobilising political movements, researchers are encouraged to investigate how metaphors are used in memes, hashtags, and viral content to convey political messages and ideologies in innovative ways. The relationship between conceptual metaphor,

critical discourse and language of politics is a rich interdisciplinary field of study that sheds light on how language shapes our understanding of politics, structures our cognitive processes and also influences our behaviours.

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