All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought (ANUJAT)
A Multidisciplinary Approach

Volume 8/ Number 1

November 2020

Article 6

A Pragma- Stylistic Analysis of the First Speech of President Muhammad Buhari on Coronavirus Pandemic

MOSHOOD ZAKARIYAH

MOSHOOD ZAKARIYAH holds a PhD in English Language from Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria. He specializes in Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics and Feminist Stylistics. He is a Senior Lecturer, and currently the Head of English Department, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

For this and additional works at:

anujat.anuc.edu.gh

Copyright © November 2020 All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought (ANUJAT) and Authors

Recommended Citation:

Zakariyah, M. (2020). A Pragma- Stylistic Analysis of the First Speech of President Muhammad Buhari on Coronavirus Pandemic. *All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought (ANUJAT)*, 8(1): 90-105. All Nations University Press.

doi: [http://doi.org/ 10.47987/ OYIO6742](http://doi.org/10.47987/OYIO6742)

Available at: <http://anujat.anuc.edu.gh/universityjournal/anujat/Vol8/No1/6.pdf>

Research Online is the Institutional repository for All Nations University College. For further information, contact the ANUC Library: anujat@anuc.edu.gh

Abstract

Scholarly works abound on President Muhammadu Buhari's political speeches but very few have been done on Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, this paper aims at investigating a stylo-pragmatic study of President Buhari's First speech on Coronavirus Pandemic with a view to exploring how he uses language to express and convince people of their thoughts about the issues happening in the nation. To achieve this, ten (10) utterances relating to themes of economic effect, palliative measures, world power measures, security measures, preventive measures, and importance of human lives were purposively selected from the speech and analysed from the points of Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts and a stylistic tool of foregrounding as the theoretical framework. The study revealed that the president's language is characterised by the practs of securing and informing the readers about the covid-19 pandemic and government's efforts to secure the nation, and contain the virus against further spread. This is drawn on contextual features such as Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK), Metaphor (MPH) and Relevance (REF). The study also revealed that other instantiated pragmatic acts of securing, preventing, updating, relieving, easing, promising, pacifying, confirming and authenticating were found in the selected utterances of presidential briefing on covid-19.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pragmatics, Stylistics, Practs, Political speech.

Introduction

Language serves as the most vital tool in man's existence. Thus, language is essential in the implementation of successful dramatic rule in the country. According to Taiwo (2009, p.7), language is the conveyer belt of power. It moves people to demonstrate support, vote, debate or revolt. It is therefore a central explanation of political stability, good governance, security or polarization. The importance of language in expressing thoughts and ideas cut across all sectors or fields of human endeavour. Language is essentials to politicians. Most activities performed by the politicians are done through the use of language. This includes manifesto, campaign, rally, election, victory/inaugurations, policy formulation and implementation etc. Political speeches are becoming a popular concept especially in the area of linguistic research. The concept of political speech could be said to have originated from the rhetorical works of Greek philosophers like sophist, Socrates, plato and Aristotle. Aristotle therefore describes it as "a faculty of observing in any given case, the available means of persuasion in reference to whatever subject "(Waya & Nneji, 2013). According to Abogun (2011), political speech is "a speech or writing that is intended to influence people; the skill of using language in speech or writing in a special way that influences or incites people". Since the primary purposes of political speeches are to influence, educate, inform, persuade, incite, or entertain the masses.

On rare occasions, a speech, like presidential briefing is an important opportunity for the president to address the nation on the issues that need urgent attention. Unlike acceptance, campaign, inaugural speech, protest speeches which may be delivered at party meetings, conventions, campaign rallies and press conferences, Special speech, like presidential briefing is a public speech usually delivered by the president on notable issues, such as the case coronavirus ravaging the world. Such a speech is often delivered in a tense atmosphere, and it is usually geared towards informing, updating, sensitizing, and educating the audience. Such an occasion usually affords a speaker the opportunity to update the nation about the happenings in the country. In Nigeria, just like in other countries different means are used in bringing to the fore what is new and sensational, thereby moulding and shaping the opinion of the populace. At the wake of the COVID-19, a virus that has altered human history, the dynamics of doing things changed thereby paving ways for different reportage that has shaped the opinions of people.

A novel coronavirus, designated as 2019-nCoV, emerged in Wuhan, China, towards the end of 2019. As of January 24, 2020, at least 830 cases had been diagnosed in nine countries: China, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, Taiwan, Nepal, and the United States. Coronaviruses make up a large family of viruses that can infect birds and mammals, including humans, according to world health organisation (WHO). These viruses have been responsible for several outbreaks around the world, including the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) pandemic of 2002-2003 and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) outbreak in South Korea in 2015. Most recently, a novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2, also known as COVID-19) triggered an outbreak in China in December 2019, sparking international concern. While some coronaviruses have caused devastating epidemics, others cause mild to moderate respiratory infections, like the common cold (Shrikrushna, Quazi, Shubham, Suraj, Shreya, Rohit, Sagrula and Biyani, 2020).

The coronavirus pandemic has some effects on Nigerians. The national and state orders for lockdown had adverse effects on the economy. Virtually every activity that requires social, official, and religious gatherings were cancelled. Many private organisations including banks, schools, hotels, airline operators, transport companies, etc., laid-off their staff and the few that were retained had their salaries reduced. In addition, the prices of goods, especially essential products like water and food items skyrocketed. Hence, Nigerians groaned in pains: the pains of job loss, the pains of restriction of movement, the pains of high cost of goods, and above all, the pains of the fear of Covid-19. It is against the above backdrop that President Muhammed Buhari (PMB) addressed the nation on 29th March 2020 to address some prevailing issues in respect of coronavirus (covid-19) in Nigeria. Therefore, the thrust of this paper is to dissect the speeches of PMB with the aim of providing answers to the following questions using pragmatic stylistic as a toolkit:

1. What form of pragmatic acts are predominant in the speech and why?
2. What are the linguistics indices used by President Muhammed Buhari to affirm the existence of coronavirus (covid-19) in Nigeria?

3. In what way(s) does PMB depict that the Federal Government as responsible and responsive with reference to the spread and management of coronavirus in Nigeria?
4. What are the linguistic element used by PMB to win the sympathy and confidence of Nigerians with reference to coronavirus crisis in the country?

Review of Related Concepts

Language and Politics

Language is a powerful weapon and politics is itself concerned with the use of power (Bolinger, 1980; Fairclough, 1989) cited in Adebisi (2012). Indeed, men are engaged in politics as they try to define their positions in society, as they struggle for scarce resources, and as they try to convince others to accept their points of view (Anifowose, 1999, Adedimeji, 2005). The language of politics largely oscillates between deception and persuasion (rhetoric) (Jones and Wareing, 1999). In other words, the goal of political language is either to deceive or persuade in any given context. Within the Nigerian context, as noted by Abati (2001) cited in Adedimeji (2005), there is a “gradual movement from the sublime to the ridiculous in the use of English language in Nigerian politics”.

Politics is one of the realities in our social world. Since language is the creator of the social world, it therefore becomes inevitable for language and politics to be intrinsically linked. Language is indeed central to politics. The view of the relationship between language and politics is age-long. According to Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), Aristotle was the earliest person to engage the subject on the relationship of language and politics, and his view on the matter is that since human beings are political animals, speech is basically an asset with which they enact their political nature.

Scholars have also explored the relationship between language and politics. Schaffner (2004, p.117) asserts that “politics cannot be conducted without language”. Chilton (2004, p.6) captures the centrality of language to politics in the following words: “the doing of politics is predominantly constituted in language.” Chilton’s (2004) remark unequivocally impresses upon us the fact that politics is only politics through language. Beard (2000, p.2) captures this same sense when he opines that the whole essence of politics is to gain power, exercise and keep power and language is the major vehicle for achieving these goals. Adegoju (2005, p.54) contributes to the discourse on the centrality of language to politics when he says that “the intricate bond between language and politics is such that it becomes difficult to conceive of politics without its medium – language”. Similarly, Ayeomoni (2004, p.200) reinforces “the interconnectedness of language and politics when he remarks that language is the means by which politics or political discourse and ideas are widely disseminated”.

While most of the opinions above on the role of language in politics seem to echo the centrality of language to politics, Awonusi (2008, p.10) considers the relationship between language and politics in a somewhat different way when he says that “the relationship between politics and language is bi-directional”. By this, Awonusi means that language influences politics

as much as politics influences language. This view is similar to the sense conveyed by Opeibi (2009), who considers the relationship between language and politics as symbiotic. While one tends to accept the view that language is central to politics, as political actions are inevitably linguistic/semiotic actions, the fact remains that politics influences and shapes language, as political language has its distinct features which mark it political. However, no matter how one views the relationship between language and politics, the undeniable truth is that an intrinsic relationship of complementarity exists between the two.

Scholars have engaged in the study of the relationship of language and politics from different academic perspectives. Linguists, sociologists and political scientists have indeed worked on the interdependence of the two concepts. In fact, the issues of language and politics can be said to have deepened interdisciplinarity in scholarship in recent times. But generally speaking, the two fields in which the relationship between language and politics is most explored are political science and linguistics. Although each of the disciplines focuses on different issues, they also have some meeting points (Awonusi, 2008). Since politics is all about gaining power to make decisions, to control the economic power of the state, to control other people's behaviours, language according to Ayoade (1982, p.724), is the conveyor belt of power, which moves people to vote, debate or revolt. For instance, while linguists will generally be interested in the linguistic choices made by politicians to appeal to the electorate in political contexts, political scientists tend to examine issues articulated through language by politicians. Specifically, the attention given to the relationship between language and politics has contributed to the entrenchment of political discourse not only as a discourse genre but also as an academic discipline. In addition, critical discourse analysis as a relatively new strand in research on discourse which is fast growing dwells greatly on discourses that can be considered as political discourse such as political speeches, political advertising, political debates, among others.

Insights from scholars such as Beard (2002), van Dijk (2001), Akinoreoluwa (2003), among others, reveal that politics influences and shapes language greatly. Since politics involves wielding power, and political actions are enacted through discursive formations (van Dijk, 2001), it therefore becomes important for linguistic/semiotic resources to be used in ways that will enable politicians achieve their aim of wielding power. To win elections in politics, politicians are usually conscious of the need for them to persuade and convince the electorate using different means.

Pragmatic Stylistics

Stylistics is the study of the ability of language users to use language in the most appropriate way. According to Yule (1996), it is the study of language in use; it can also be described as an alternative expression. By this, we mean the tendency for language to be used in various ways and patterns in expressing the same thought. In the words of Encivist, cited in Lawal (2003, p.4) stylistics can be viewed as 'a shell of thought' that is, the linguistic realization of thought, idea or impressions, or the patterns of language used either spoken or written to unveil the thought, idea or pass across the speaker's intended message.

According to Galperin, 1997, Stylistics is defined as a branch of general linguistic which deals with certain types of texts (discourse) which due to the choice and arrangement of language means are distinguished by the pragmatic aspect of the communication". "Stylistics is a branch of linguistics which studies the characteristics of situationally distinctive uses of language, with particular reference to literary language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language" (Thorn-Borrow and Shan-Wareing, 1988).

In the words of Leech and Short (1981, p.11), style is viewed as "the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose, and so on." Crucial to the study of style is the patterns of language to the particular situation in which language is used. This implies that stylistics is context determined and context specific as the same speakers may opt for different styles depending on the prevailing circumstances. The prevailing circumstance or societal situation, including the condition of the interlocutors (context) not only determines what to be done with language, but also how such thoughts would be expressed. Context in opinion of Brown and Yule (1983, p. 35) is understood to mean the immediately preceding discourse and the situation of the participants. In a written text the beginning provides the necessary orientation into the discourse, since nothing precedes it. But it should be noted that the title, Appearance, author, even publisher of a book or magazine provide the reader with many hints as to the kind of text they can expect, and so contextualize it some content.

According to Fowler (1986) and Verdonk (2002), "stylistics is too mechanistic and too reductive, saying nothing significant about historical context or aesthetic theory. Eschewing evaluation for the most part in the interests of a naive 'objection' and claiming too much for interpretations that are best merely text-immanent". In-line with the above submission, an integration of pragmatics and stylistics as a linguistics tool for the evaluation the speech of PMB is considered to be a worthy academic engagement. According to Lawal (2003), stylistics cannot be divorced from sociolinguistics. This is because, as a branch of linguistics, stylistics is viewed as derived largely from a sociolinguistic interest. This implies that speeches are not made in isolation of what transpire in human society. Hence, there is a correlation between societal issues and the patterns of language used to express them, as well as what the patterns aim to achieve.

Theoretical Framework

Pragmatic Acts Theory

In communicative events the deployment of utterances is a function of certain variables which are pertinent to the realization of appropriate acting. This means that utterances in themselves have no propelling force but the socio-cultural context that produces such utterances accounts for the illocutionary impetus that utterances have. Mey (2001) consents to the postulation of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) that uttering a speech act connotes that the speaker does something with his utterance, however, refused to agree with the name "Speech Act" and the notion of Speech Acts Verbs that Austin and Searle hold dearly to the theory. Mey contends that acts performed by

utterance do not hinge on the speech act verbs deployed in an utterance. This has an exception only in institutionalized context, for instance the law court holds the classical ‘Order’ and ‘baptise’ used by a priest in baptism. Mey further opines that Speech acts verbs are not an intrinsic part of performativity as Austin and Searle claim. There are varying ways of expression gratitude without using specific verb and the act is ostensibly understood. The dynamicity of human communication has provided the basis for using indirect means of communicating intricate messages.

As a consequence of these – loopholes discovered with the speech acts and speech act verbs, Mey proposed Pragmatic Act Theory (PAT henceforth) and holds speech act as one of its category. The PAT captures holistically the variables that usually account for the production of utterances and how utterances are construed in context. Furthermore, Jacob Lee Mey gave a more encapsulating theory which does not hinge only an utterance acts and performatives like other speech act models. Mey’s theory clearly anchors two elements streaming directly from the peak called pragmeme. He called this theory Pragmatic Act Theory. The theory addresses the shortcomings that undercut the classical pragmatic theories, particularly Speech Act Theory propounded by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). Mey (2001) submits that the pragmeme, which is at the apex of the Pragmatic Act Theory anchors ‘activity’ and ‘textual’ aspects of communication. The activity part shows the roles of the participants of discourse. The textual part concerns the various contextual variables that operate in discourse. The ‘ipra’ or ‘pract’ initiates a pragmatic act to realize a pragmeme. Each pract is at the same time an ‘allopract’, that is, a specific production of a definite pragmeme. During communication, participants simultaneously produce speech acts, conversational acts, physical acts, psychological acts and prosodic acts which manifest in varied contexts: INF (inference); REF (reference); VCE (Voice); SSK (Shared Situation Knowledge); MPH (Metaphor); and M (Metapragmatic Joker).

Pragmatic Act Theory is a peculiar approach to explain the manner pragmeme are represented in pragmatics in speech situations. Mey’s criticism against the speech act theory is that in order for speech acts to be effective, they have to be situated (Kecskes 2010). Mey (2001) opines that both pragmeme and speech act “both rely on, and actively create, the situation in which they are realized. In short, there are no speech acts, but only situated speech acts, or instantiated pragmatic acts”. As a consequence, the emphasis is not on conditions and rules for an individual speech act, but on characterizing a general situational prototype (what Mey calls a pragmeme) that can be executed in the situation.

Mey’s critique of the speech act theory is on the insistence on the abstract idealization of the intentional speaker and hearer and not on social reality (Hoye & Kaiser, 2007 cited in Omolabi 2016). Mey (2006) argues that the speaker/writer and listener/reader cannot be isolated from societal reality. Odebunmi (2006) holds similar opinion that in pragmatic acts the emphasis is on a general situation prototype for identify acts performed in speech and not on rules for an individual speech acts. He argued that the problem with the speech act theory is that it lacks a theory of action, and even if it does have such a theory it is individual- rather than societal-centered (Mey 2001). In Mey’s opinion human activity is not the privilege of the individual. Individuals are located in a society and this society determines language usage and how the deployment of linguistic resources

is used to mean. The theory therefore pays particular attention on the use, users and the context of speech event.

The schema below represents Pragmatic Act Theory:

Figure 1 Pragmeme, pract, allopract. Adapted from Mey (2001, p. 222)

From the schema above it should be noted that the idea of Austin and Searle is incongruent and not holistic. Mey is not just interested in a new nomenclature, rather, he took a drastic and a more encompassing approach to dabble into other resources that account for the appropriateness of language (by language we mean every mode of communication) use in a situated context. Also, discourse, that is, language in action is not limited to utterances alone and the use of performative verbs as proposed by Austin and expanded by Searle. Other language resources also do things. These are the things Mey has incorporated into what he calls Pragmatic Act theory.

Theoretical Model for the Study

A model of Pragmatic Theory has been developed in this study which is suitable for the analysis of the interaction of stylistics and pragmatic elements in the selected fashion reports. This model has input from the works of (Mey 2001, Oyedemi, 2017, Omolabi & Durosinmi, 2016, Omolabi & Adedimeji, 2019). The model incorporates some categories which other models do not have, especially stylistic elements that possess potentials for pragmatic acting or aiding practs performed in the selected speech.

Modified Schema of Mey (2001) Pragmatic Act Theory

From the schema above, it is clear that the speech anchors two categories; activity and textual parts. The activity part shows actual instance of language use which can come in any of the forms – speech act which is indirect in the recent trend of communication especially by reports. It can simultaneously take the forms of dialogue with the use of turn taking and psychological acts. During speech events, interactants leverage on the linguistics and extra-linguistic affordances to communicate. The prosodic features as small as they are performing specific acts when they are properly situated.

This study also incorporates into the schema; expressive means and communicative acts as part of the needed situational variables that are capable of aiding the realization of pragmeme. Expressive means include the deployment of literary devices in text especially with the intent of perform an act or aiding the performance of an act. In political speech, this is natural proclivity. Politicians also engage different communicative strategies in practicing. The inclusion of this category is to provide basis for the exploration of the different communicative strategies employed by the selected speech. While pragmatic act theory is birthed on exploring a general prototype for the realization of pragmeme in speech situation, this study submits that, the viability of realizing a

pragmeme in discourse in hinge on the Theme. Hence, thematic pragmatic act constitutes a strong basis for appropriateness of utterances.

Methodology

The study extracts a total of ten sentences from the first speech of President Muhammadu Buhari on coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic using purposive random sampling. The speech was made on 29th March, 2020 and it is considered suitable as data of this study. This is partly informed by some prevailing controversial circumstances in relation to the speech. The selected utterances from the speech depict the importance of human lives, health facilities, economic effects, world power, and palliatives measures, among others. Using pragmatic stylistic approach as a tool of analysis, the study adapts/blends Mey (2001) pragmatic acts with basic elements of stylistics as the theoretical framework for the stylistics. The choice of both stylistics and pragmatics for the analysis is informed by the synergy between the two branches of linguistics. Stylistics accounts for the linguistic forms or patterns adopted in the speech while pragmatics explained what the speech overtly or covertly intends to achieve.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Coronavirus Motivated Speech (CMS) on the Importance of Human Lives

Text 1: Paragraph 2

From the first sign that coronavirus or covid-19 was turning into an epidemic and was officially declared a world-wide emergency, the federal government state planning preventive, containment and creative measures in the event the disease hits Nigeria.

Pragmatic Act

The above text is an example of Coronavirus Motivated Speech undergirded with the context of the importance of human lives with the incongruous allopract of informing, sensitizing and securing. On the one hand, the pract informs the readers about undesirable prevailing of covid-19 in the country, Nigeria, precisely. The text which is made by President Muhamadu Buhari in an attempt to showcase efforts made by his government to curtail the spread of coronavirus in the country, and the government plans to prevent the spread in the event the disease hits the country. On the other hand, the practs are also used to sensitize and secure Nigerians to be wary of the spread of the virus in case it bangs into the country.

Meanwhile, given that to grasp the intended meaning inherent in a motivated speech makes a lot of demand on the psyche, this instantiated pragmatic acts of coronavirus motivated speech on the importance of human lives are psychological act, which interact with the contextual features such as reference (REF), metaphor (MPH), inference (INF) shared situational knowledge (SSK) and relevance to produce allopracts of informing sensitizing and securing. Specific reference is made to covid-19 Otherwise known as coronavirus which emanates from China, a country in East Asia, the largest in the world by population and the third largest by area. The reference to China is

imperative because the coronavirus outbreak originate there in November 2019, hence the name covid-19.

Stylistic Devices and Expressive Means: the speaker in this datum achieves an instantiated assertive pragmatic force of informing through the use of three stylistic devices; alliteration, and collocation and synonyms. Alliteration is the repetition of the initial consonant in two or more words. In the text above alliteration is observed in the repetition of the initial consonant voiceless plosive bilabial [p] and voiceless plosive velar [k] in the words; *planning preventive* and *containment curative*. This is foregrounded and it is used to show emphasis and enshrine in the mind of the reader the idea that government is making effort to ensure preventive measures are taken in case covid-19 visits the country. Also, the use of collocation is noted. It is the habitual or expected co-occurrence of words, a characteristic-feature of lexical, behavior in language, testifying to its predictability- *epidemic collocates widespread disease*. Though, the word pandemic is more suitable than the epidemic used in the speech because the former spreads only in the community while the latter affects the proportion of the population.

Coronavirus Motivated Speech (CMS) on the Preventive Measures

Text 2: Paragraph 9

For now, the best and most efficient way to avoid getting infected is through regular hygienic and sanitary practices as well as social distancing.

Text3: Paragraph 10

As individual, we remain the greatest weapon to fight this pandemic. By washing our hand regularly with clean water and soap disinfecting frequently used surfaces and areas, coughing into a tissue or elbow and strictly adhering to infective control measures in health facilities, we can contain this virus

Pragmatic Act

Text 2 and 3 are examples of Coronavirus Motivated Speech on Preventive Measures. The pract has an assertive allopracts of informing, sensitizing, preventing and updating. The practs of informing and updating are to inform and update the readers about the danger of Coronavirus, and ways of preventing it so as not be contracted the virus. This is informed through INF, REL, MPH of the existing issue on covid-19 which has endangered the world. In this, the president sensitizes the people on the best and most efficient way to avoid being infected, and this is, by regularly hygienic and keeping social distancing for at least, a meter as mitigated by the health practitioners. In corollary with text 2, text 3 supports the preceding text on how individuals control the spread of the diseases, and perhaps, how infection can be controlled.

Stylistic Devices and Expressive Means: A remarkable stylistic device in above texts is pun (the use of polysemous word to suggest two or more meanings, commonly literal or figurative). This is observed in the paronomasia phrase (the use of words alike in sound but different in meaning)

“greatest weapon to fight this pandemic which denotatively means to win or success, contain the virus. However, in this text, it is used to foreground a special effective or ingenious technique to contain the spread of the virus. The stylistic device was used by the speaker to make the get the attention of the readers to the preventive measures of coronavirus.

Coronavirus Motivated Speech on Economic Effects and Palliative Measures

Text 4: Paragraph 54

For the most vulnerable in our society, I have directed that the conditional cash transfer for nthe next two months to paid immediately. Our internally displaced persons will also receive two months of food rations in the coming weeks.

Pragmatic Act

The pragmatics Coronavirus Motivated Speech on Economic effect/ palliative measures is undergirded by instantiated pragmatic acts with the assertive allopracts of relieving, informing and easing. This CMS is intended to inform the public through the voice of the speaker, Muhamadu Buhari, the president and the commander- in- chief of the armed forces of the country to the readers on his efforts to ensure people get succor in this pandemic period. The president knows the implications of the imposed lockdown on the citizenry and as a faithful and courageous president; he relieves and eases the tension, most especially the vulnerable ones to be given conditional cash for two months. And the president also extends his hands to all IDPs camps in the country to be given foods immediately.

The relevancy of the Coronavirus Motivated on Economic effects and Palliative Measures is driven by the exigencies of the Coronavirus pandemic which is currently a topical issue in both Nigeria and the world at large and how it has affected economy of the world at large.

Stylistic Devices and Expressive Means: the voiceless velar plosive [k] alliterates in the speech. “Conditional cash” Also, there is use of synonymy. The word vulnerable as used in the text is prettily used by the speaker to substitute the word weak, poor, helpless people of the country. These stylistic devices are foregrounded to make the speech captivating and emphatic

Coronavirus Motivated Speech on Vaccines/ Preventive Measures

Text 5: Paragraph 7

As of today, covid-19 has no cure. Scientists around the world are working very hard to develop a vaccine

Text 6: Paragraph 8

We are in touch with these institutions as they work towards a solution that will be certified by international and local medical authorities within the shortest possible time.

Pragmatic Act

The texts above (5& 6) are examples of instantiated pragmatic acts with commissive allopracts of promising and pacifying. Based on shared situational knowledge (SSK) the covid-19 pandemic has been ravaging the world and all measures taken to ensure that possible vaccines are detected to curtail it is still skeptical. This however is echoed by the president to inform the people that at present, the pandemic has no cure, and when in case any solution emerges, the public would be aware. To back the speaker, the world health organization (WHO) also affirms that it is yet to neither approve nor discover any vaccines certified for the treatment of covid-19. In this, the speaker promises that the world is struggling to make to efforts to develop vaccines for the cure of the virus both international and local authorities.

Coronavirus Motivated Speech (CMS) on Effect of World Actors

Text 7: Paragraph 11

Since the outbreak was reported in china, our government has been monitoring the situation closely and studying the various responses adopted by other countries.

Text 8: Paragraph 12

Indeed, the Director General of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) was one of ten global health leaders invited by the World Health Organization to visit china and understudy their responses approach. I am personally very proud of Dr Ihekweazu for this on behalf of all Nigerians.

In these texts, at least three instantiated pragmatic acts are observed. These are practs of informing, updating and promising. The activity parts of these pragmemes cover one interactant which is the president of the country, Muhamadu Buhari over the issue of Coronavirus pandemic ravaging the world. This, he informs the public about the efforts of government towards ensuring the spread of Coronavirus is contained, and that the government is closely monitoring and getting responses from other countries on how the virus can be contained.

Also, text tactically informs the public that the NCDC Director, Dr Ihekweazu is one of the global health leaders invited by WHO to visit China and deliberate how the pandemic could be arrested. This aptly shows that the president is not sleeping with his two eyes closed hence his efforts to protect every citizen of the country against the virus.

Stylistic Devices and Expressive Means: the prominent stylistic device in the texts is imagery. Imagery is a device used to describe or give vivid description of work. It appeals to human senses to deepen the readers understanding. In this, the speaker uses the phrase “to *understudy their response approach*, shows that Nigeria is ready to emulate any available options use in abroad as a way to curtail Coronavirus in Nigeria. This device foregrounds that the speaker tries to represents ideas in the readers’ mind.

Coronavirus Motivated Speech (CMS) on Security Measures

Text 9: Paragraph 30

As I mentioned earlier, as at this morning we had ninety-seven confirmed cases, majority of these are in Lagos and Abuja. All the confirmed cases are getting the necessary medical care

Text 10: Paragraph 32

The few confirmed cases outside Lagos and Abuja are linked to persons.

Pragmatic Act

The above texts are examples of Coronavirus Motivated Speech undertoned with the context of security/ preventive measures to covid-19. The texts are undergirded with the practs of confirming and authenticating. On one hand, text 9, informs and confirms to the public about the cases of Coronavirus pandemic as at March 29, 2020. This practically tells the readers that covid-19 is real as against the insinuations from quarters that Coronavirus is fake. On the other hand, the text 10 clearly tells us where and those that have contracted the disease

The texts are intended to keep the nation abreast on the global pandemic and what the government is doing to expose the danger zones. The understanding of the texts is driven by the interplay of common ground and shared situational knowledge rooted in prior experience readers' as well as reference, relevance and the use of metapragmatic marker. Coronavirus is a motif in Nigeria's polity. It is now a situational bound utterance that every Nigerians are acquainted with and has understood the surge. This is because of the shared situational knowledge about the pandemic in the world.

Stylistic Device and Expressive Means: the use of alliteration is prominent in the text 9; the voiceless velar plosive sound alliterates. The alliteration in this context is not only to aid memorability, but also to enshrine in the minds of readers about the Coronavirus cases.

Implication to the Public

The implication of this study is to implore the public on the sensitization of the Coronavirus as expressed in the speech. The president, in his speech highlighted ways of meeting people's needs, especially at the period when things are likely to be hard for the people. The speaker in the speech utilized language properly to convey his messages of commitment, directing, appreciating, promising and in so doing, the public will be weary of the virus. And with thenumerous things adumbrated in the speech, it is expected the speech would have a great impact of the people of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Political speech as a form of discourse offers elected public office holders the opportunity to fulfil promises made during electioneering campaigns, and to give assurance of good governance through effective language use. Through the analyzed speech, President Muhammadu Buhari makes use of pragmatic acts of **Informing and updating** the public about the novel coronavirus

ravaging the world. This is unsurprising because one of the main aims of the political office holder like President Muhammadu Buhari is to inform the public on topical issues or otherwise of events happening around him and even beyond them. The study has also revealed that the instantiated pragmatic acts of securing, preventing, updating, relieving, easing, promising, pacifying, confirming and authenticating were found in the selected utterances of presidential briefing on covid-19. In addition, shared situation knowledge, relevance, reference, inference were the pragmatic tools deployed to mark the pragmatic acts.

In the same vein, the study revealed that the president Buhari has addressed the issues of his inadequacies to address the nation on Coronavirus outbreak and its spread in Nigeria. This has been widely politicised by other political opponents as it becomes a hotbed of political attacks, accusation and counter-accusation along partisan politics, thereby relegating matters of life and death to the background. The study recommends that further studies on Covid-19 speech should be examined with other relevant linguistic theories.

References

- Abati, R. (2001). "English, as Spoken by Politicians". *The Guardian*. May 4.
- Adedimeji, M. A. (2005). *The Language of Politics in Nigeria: Conflicts and Resolution*. Paper Presented at a "National Conference on Crisis and Conflict Management in Nigeria Since 1980" at Ejoor Hall, Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA), Kaduna between the 15th and 17th of June, 2005.
- Ademilokun, M. (2015). A multimodal discourse analysis of some newspaper political campaign advertisements for Nigeria's 2015 elections.
- Adebisi, O.T. (2015). Investigating the perlocutionary thrust of language of propaganda in the political writings on Nigerian 2015 election. Published by the department of English, federal University, Oye Ekiti, Ekiti state
- Anifowose, R. (1999). The nature and scope of political science In Anifowose, R. and F. Enemuo (Eds.) *elements of politics* (pp.1-15), Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd.
- Awonusi, V.O. (2008). Language, politics and democratic development in Nigeria. The 2008 Annual Lecture of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, 12 February.
- Awonuga, C.O. (1988). Political rhetoric: Awolowo 's use of language. *ODU: A Journal of Western African Studies* 34, 150-196.
- Ayoade, J. A. (1982). Criteria and constraints of conceptual and terminological analysis: An African perspective. In F. W. Riggs (ed.) *Proceedings of the Conference on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Frankfurt: Indeks Verlag.
- Beard, A. (2000). The language of politics. London: Routledge
- Opeibi, B. (2009). *Discourse, Politics and the 1993 Presidential Election Campaigns in Nigeria: A Re-invention of June 12 Legacy*. Lagos: Nouvelle Communications Limited.
- Black, E. (2006). Pragmatic stylistics. United Kingdom: Edinburgh University Press Limited.
- Omolabi, I. (2016). *A pragmatic Analysis of selected news reports on abducted Chibok girl's in Nigeria*. An unpublished MA dissertation, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
- Omolabi, I & Durosini, M. O. (2016). A pragmatic study of photo news reports on the abducted Chibok Girls in Nigeria. *Issues in Language and Literary studies, Kaduna State University & Samuel Ajayi Crowther University*. 1(2),34-53
- Omolabi, I. & Zakariyah, M. (2018). A Critical Pragmatic Analysis of Selected Political Cartoons in Nigerian Newspapers. *New Explorations in Applied Linguistics and Literature Festschrift in Honour of Prof. Samuel K Tswana, IBB University, Lapai* 1(1), 1-10
- Omolabi, I. (2019). Pragmatic acts in the selected Fulani Herdsmen's Killings Reportage in Nigerian Newspaper. *Issues in Language and Literary studies*
- Omolabi, I. & Adedimeji, M. A. (2019) a pragmatic analysis of selected political interviews in a Nigerian Newspaper. *All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought*, 6(2):88-120.
- Galperin, (1977). Stylistics. Moscow Higher School.
- Norgard, N., Montoro, R., Busse, B. (2010). Key terms in stylistics. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Thorn-Borrow, J. & Wareing, S. (1998). Patterns in language: an introduction to language and literary stylistics. USA: Routledge.