
**REPORT ON LITERACY AND LINGUISTIC BARRIERS IN AKWA IBOM STATE'S
POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS: A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY**

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ABSTRACT: *The proactive tempo of Nigeria's grammatical interactions has had insidious spell on her communicative contents. This is showcased in the paradigm drift from forecasting electioneering results where political grammar makes intended voters become inevitable. Obviously, situational conditions arise where politicized communications are misdirected on the ground of communication accessibilities such as semantics, pragmatics, literacy and linguistic barriers in politicking. In that light, this paper wants to sheave prevalence of PR/Advertising in Nigeria's political Halloweens, rhetorical ding dongs to unconventional political grammar, language in campaigns, its contents and barriers to citizens' understanding of political truce. The study was supported from the researchers' participatory observations and the timeline was between 2007 and 2012 Elections in Akwa Ibom State.*

KEYWORDS: *ACN, PDP, campaigns, innuendoes, language and politics*

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars, including Omozuwa and Ezejideaku (2009) have commented on the relevance and prominence of coloration of political grammars. It en-soul "Nigerians to consider 'politics' as an exercise often associated with lies, deceits and propaganda. It is observed that political campaign language is characterized by propaganda through attack on party, exaggeration, vagueness and diatribes". Orwell (1946) says "language of politics is characterized by lack of precision, perhaps because the speaker has a meaning and cannot express it or he inadvertently says something else, or he is almost indifferent as to whether his words mean anything or not". These statements necessitated the research, leading trails on campaign rallies, reviled language used, both in print and spoken by candidates of different political parties. The printed works came in pamphlets, billboards, posters and advertorials and interviews in newspapers and in the social media.

It was observed that politics as a field of human endeavour in Nigeria admits all, from the motor park touts to university professors. The language of campaigns, therefore, was a mixed grill of gutter to sublime, and all were used to advance the cause of the political party and the candidates' interest. In essence, the literacy level of candidates did not count in the campaign rallies since what concerned the politicians most was to put the message across, ignoring the basic tenet of communication, which is; "has the recipient understood the message?"

Participatory Observation

Supporting information for this work was collected through participatory observation. The researchers joined campaign teams of many political parties during the 2007 and 2012 Local Government Elections in Akwa Ibom State, one of the states in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. For comparative analysis, during these two elections, tapes and video recorders were used to record campaign speeches of Chairmanship and Councillorship candidates from the two prominent political parties (PDP and ACN) that dominated the political cloud in the state.

A Brief History of Akwa Ibom State

The geographical entity known as Akwa Ibom State was part of the Eastern Region when Nigeria gained independence in 1960. In 1967, it formed part of the state called South Eastern State and in 1976 which was renamed Cross River State. Akwa Ibom State was carved out of Cross River State by the General Ibrahim Babangida's administration on September 23rd, 1987, (Antia, 2005, p. 4). Based on her mineral status, Antia (2005, p. 4), recorded that "mineral wise, Akwa Ibom has recently become a great producer of crude oil and has occupied a very high rung in the ladder of crude oil production in Nigeria." Recognizably, she is made up of thirty-one LGAs, approximately eighteen Ibibio LGAs; eight represent the Anang, five of Oron. The state is multi-cultural and multilingual.

Political Communications

In political communications, it is interesting to create a relationship among politics, citizens and communication modes that connect these groups to each other. By examining how these forces interact with each other and affect one another. Edo (2013, p. 1) gave a definition of political communications as "the purposeful processes in-which elected and appointed leaders, the media, and public citizens use messages to construct meaning about political practice. When people exercise power in support of public interests, their messages and interactions are strategic means for influencing public policies." He goes on to add that "political communication is essentially an interdisciplinary field of contemporary research which involves political science, linguistics, sociology and communication. Each has something to contribute to the growth of this emerging and interesting field of research in Nigeria". In the same vein, Brown, Edde, Bassey-Duke, Okon, and Ellah, (2010) appreciated cartoons and other expressive visual symbols adopted in simplifying bureaucratic barriers and passing on messages of burning national issues between citizenry and politicians, devoid of overt character assassinations, but to establish social and democratic equilibrium. The visual and literal linguists are therefore majorly interested in the language component (speech analysis) of political communications. Political communications in Nigeria, according to Gandu (1995, p. 5), listed five major areas of research interest, and which were:

- i. Linguistic communication in National/State Assemblies
- ii. Linguistic communication for the negotiating National/State bodies like Federal, State and Local Government Executive Councils
- iii. Linguistic management: linguistic culture employed for daily administration of governments' policies
- iv. Stated conditions with national/budgetary speeches
- v. Language of political campaigns

The first four had some semblance of research in years gone by. The long years of military rule in Nigeria stifled research effort on the language of political campaigns. This is the first time since the nation's independence Nigeria is enjoying sixteen years of uninterrupted democracy. The preponderance of language of campaigns toward abusive messages at campaign rallies can be excused from the standpoint of military mentality which the politicians imbibed during the long years of military rule. Language of political campaigns throughout the state was very combative like "we will capture Uyo," "Uyo will fall this time around", and "we will take over Ikot Ekpene from PDP".

Literacy

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defined literacy as the "ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potentials, and to participate fully in their community and wider society." Literacy is conventionally understood as the ability to use graphic symbols to represent spoken language. Literacy, so conceived, is one important class of mediated human activity. It is a form of literacy based on print (UNESCO, 2012).

In addition to ordinary language, literacy often refers to the ability to interpret or negotiate understanding within any mode of communication (Cole & Keyser, 1988, p. 50). Literacy encompasses a complex set of abilities to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development. These abilities most often require formal training, even when not in a formal school setting. The ability to read, write and read when written to and be able to understand when spoken to in that language constitute literacy. As we shall see in this work, the major assumption by Nigerian politicians is that since they can talk, the electorate is expected to understand them, notwithstanding the language used. Moreover, some may have what to say but lack the ability to present abstract issues in concrete realities, especially current issues about women and youth empowerments, ICT and environmental issues. Also, most of our elites were very wary of wading into politics especially between 1999 and 2007, the first eight years of our democracy because "politics is seen as a dirty game" and because of fear of military interruption. Therefore, majority of those who went into it had no viable means of survival and no formal training in school setting beyond school certificate, and lacked exposure in what constitutes language of political discourse, especially those seeking for Chairmanship and Councillorship positions in Local Government Areas.

The Issue of Language

The major challenges experienced during the 2015 Presidential electioneering periods were earlier forecasted in Ali (2008) viewing the situation thus "...it is probable, mark my word... I know we have a press that largely is ignoramus and they tend to say they don't understand or they cannot decipher my English. They cannot because they never studied the way I studied. I said it is possible, it is a totally different kettle of fish from probable. I emphasized that because, by now, they will go and write a different headline". Seweje (1996) had observed that "politics is one of the most popular fields in which ambiguity and vagueness are highly manifested. Politicians by their nature

do not make clear what their intentions are, and they are never precise in their words, so that they would not be held responsible, if their promises to the electorate are not fulfilled”.

Literacy Barriers in Political Communications

The researchers realized certain barriers hindering effective message delivery to the electorate, among which is literacy barriers. Literacy barriers in political communications, as the researchers noticed in the various campaigns attended, come in different forms. The researchers were able to note the following:

Education

The issues of education and literacy are issues of vital importance in political communications. Education is simply in its general sense a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Lack of formal training of politicians in the art of political communications has made the language of political campaigns vague, ambiguous, and slanderous and in many cases lack semantic exactitude. It should be noted that the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) stipulates a minimum of School Certificate for candidates seeking elective offices. In the Akwa Ibom State political domain, of the 31 Local Government Chairmen in the state, only one had a school certificate. Others had Ordinary Diplomas and degrees in various disciplines. Of the 987 politicians that sought for elective positions as councillors into the 329 councillorship seats in the state, 57 had First School Leaving Certificate (FLSC), 362 had School Certificate and 420 had Diplomas, degrees and higher degrees. With this, the language of political campaigns would have been uniquely decipherable, but the opposite was the case. One major factor for this is that politics admits all from every conceivable profession and background, thus the variety of political campaign speeches noticed at campaign rallies, validated these claims. Our elected officers are ignorant of the basic rules of political communication and lack the commitment to learn same.

Bombastic words

The language of political campaigns is full of bombastic words. Politicians use such words to persuade the electorate of their capabilities and high educational attainment, the fact that the electorate may not be in tune with their speeches is immaterial. The dictionary meaning of bombastic is “words without meaning, used to impress other people and sound important”. Consider this advertorial published in *The Nation* newspaper of 25th March 2013 by “Coalition of Atai Uyo Forum” captioned “Your Excellency, watch the use of Effiong Bob as smokescreen to go after you”. It was written in favour of Governor Godswill Akpabio’s second term.

If the writers can pay for its publication in a national newspaper, they might as well have asked somebody to edit it for them. This is one of the facts that politicians do not care if they are understood or not, so long as they speak, or write. As Onuoha (1991, p. 19) sought to know that if they (electorate) understood what they were being told; only a few men and women will respond in the affirmative, not with a high sense of responsibility and conviction.” The use of bombastic words at campaign rallies was to impress the electorate on the candidate’s mastery of the English Language.

Translation

Cartford (1978, p. 20) takes translation to mean “the replacement of textual material in one language (Source Language) by equivalent textual material in another (Target Language)”. Fishman (1971, p. 1) understands it as “the presentation of a statement in a language other than the language in which it was originally written”. Dosert (1955, p. 24) puts it as “that branch of applied science of language which is specifically concerned with the problem...or the fact...of the transference of meaning from one set of patterned symbols, into another set of patterned symbols”. A typical situation was during a political outing at Ibeno. The electorate was made to understand that, “let’s vote for ACN, let’s get it right this time.” This statement was interpreted as; “yak isin nwed ino udom, nti nkpo obono k’ubok udom.”

Fallacies

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1998, p. 418) assesses fallacy, “as an improper argumentation in reasoning, resulting in a misconception or presumption”. Shewan (2003, p. 92) considers it as appearing to be “an error in reasoning that renders an argument logically invalid”. According to Edo (2013, p. 133), “my party will deliver democratic dividends”. This subject has been mystified by politicians and certain times undermined, especially in the face of corruption. The ruling party (PDP) regular message was “Akwa Ibom ado ok,” meaning Akwa Ibom is okay. This is a case of the fallacy of false generalization. No nation or state in the world is okay in terms of infrastructural and human capital development.

Linguistic Barriers in Political Communications

Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria is a multicultural entity with different ethnic groups and different languages. English is the Language of Wider Communication (LWC), but its usage most often is targeted at the urban dwellers where the population is a mixture of all ethnic groups and educational backgrounds. Therefore, the choice of language must be what the electorate at that particular location or Local Government Area must understand. From the analysis of the data in the state elections, the following were distilled as linguistic barriers to effective political communications in the state.

Ambiguity

Lyons (1977, p. 38) defines ambiguity as “the encoding of more than one message by a particular signal.” Kempson (1980, p. 123) succinctly considers it as “the possession by words and sentences of more than one meaning”. Obilade (1987, p. 64) puts it this way, “subcultures determine what certain expressions mean collectively even though they are aware that this restricted meaning is not necessarily shared by the entire society”. Such conditions are obtainable when the electorate’s choice of language is meant for appeasing their ego, not minding the semantic implication of their choice of words on the electorate.

According to Thurber (2001, p. 117) “precision of communication is important, more important than ever in our era of hair-trigger balances, when a false or misunderstood word may create as much disaster as a sudden thoughtless act.” In one political rally towards his re-election bid, 5th November, 2010, in Ikono headquarters, Governor Godswill Akpabio categorically stated that “now the Anangs have zoned the Ikot Ekpene senatorial seat to the Ibibios of Ikono/Ini Federal

Constituency, which of the two sisters' local governments will produce the senator?" He replied thus "the local government that will produce the senator is -----kpan".

Commonly in-vogue, 'Kpan', according to Edo (1996, p. 10) is "onomatopoeic. It is the sound made by a gavel normally slammed by the leader of a legislative house (Senate President, Speaker of the House, or Leader of a Local Government Legislative Council, or a Judge) to signal final approval of a bill, motion or judgment." Simultaneously, in this regard, the state's President of the Youth Council, Ibang Ekong (2011) made this observation: "what is happening here today is the spiritual manifestation of the physical justification of our people". Obviously, not everybody understood these slangs.

Vagueness

Akindele and Adegbite (1999, p. 23) view vague language; "as another feature of lexis which is more prominent in spoken language than in written works. Vagueness in language use depends on contextual factors such as whether the discourse is a formal or informal one. But informal spoken context produce the highest degree of vagueness." In a similar event, Hon Etido Udofia from a reportedly said, "in three weeks time, your tenure will expire, what you make of it?" he replied thus, "Godswill will be done again". Chairman here is not referring to the will of God Almighty in Heaven, but that the former Governor's will (the Governor's name is Godswill) will be done, on whether to re-appoint him or not. And so, when a politician says "let Godswill be done in Akwa Ibom", he was referring to that will bestowed on incumbency.

Semantics

According to Ogunsiji (2000, p. 44) "linguists, language philosophers and all those concerned with the study of language agree on the subject matter of semantics---the study of meaning, but the agreement does not seem to go beyond that". Udofot (1998, p. 35) sees semantics as "a multi-dimensional discipline. It is approached from different angles. Regardless of the approach however, it is certain that the messages or signals that pass from the source to the destination must be meaningful. If this were not so, there would be no communication". What led to this maladministration was captured by Obilade (1987, p. 62) "in a face-to-face communication situation, communication breakdown is not easily attributable to any of these factors. Some other factors that may result in setting the wrong message include inherent ambiguity in language and trans-cultural constraints in communication." Mostly, used as cliché in all the campaigns "we will deliver dividends of democracy". All the parties talk about it. A close look at what is 'dividends of democracy' by the different parties and the electorate showed divergent meanings. Whereas to the politician, 'dividends of democracy' is providing infrastructures, to the electorate, it was buying cars to the political godfathers (Edo 2013, p. 134). Moreover, when a politician says "I will buy you brand new cars", he is referring to second hand cars (used cars imported from Europe). Brand new cars, straight out from the factory in Akwa Ibom political parlance, are called "Tear Rubber".

Pragmatics

Levinson (1983) in Udofot (1998, p. 110) quotes it to be "the ability of language users to pair sentences with the context in which they would be appropriate". Dijk (1977) "describes language from the point of view of the users, especially as regards the choices they make, the constraints

they encounter in using their language for social interaction and the effects their use of language have on other participants in the speech event. Therefore, the meaning of an utterance includes both those aspects that can be described as referent or denotation of individual words, and those that must be stated as belonging to the sentence, or even a series of sentences. Differences of personal status, family and social relations, degrees of intimacy, relative ages, and other such factors, irrelevant to the consideration of sentences as the expression of logical proposition are all handled under pragmatics". For example, at Ukanafun Local Government Area, a chairmanship candidate spoke thus "owo Anaang ade owo Uko. Nkpo iboho ide (an Anaang man is a man of valour; nothing will happen). At the face value, it is a straight forward statement, but the pragmatic meaning is that "if you dare an Anaangman, you will be killed, and nothing will happen."

African Language Devices

Different cultures perceive and conceptualize the experience of life in different ways and language functions as the primary carrier of these cultural connections (Mensah, 2014). This is why Adegbija (2000) in Mensah (2014) argues that '...each ethnic group expresses and identifies itself by the language it speaks and its cultural paraphernalia is shaped by its language'. In the African context, the language of mass mobilization or discussion cannot be complete without the mention of proverbs, idioms and folktales. The three genres of African literary languages were generously used throughout the state by different politicians at campaign rallies.

Proverbs

According to Mensah and Ugot (2003, p. 120) "the cross-currents of language and culture can be depicted in the use of oral performances such as proverbs, which are forms of 'deeper' communication and means of constructing reality in every speech community". Essien (2010, p. 45) adds that, "the proverb, one of the most important genres of African folklore, is a device which enables a speaker to present a speech in a more concise and picturesque manner than ordinary expressions." Ashipu (1999) accepts "---for a poet or indeed, for the speaker who is some sort of an artist in the use of words, the proverb is a model of compressed or forceful language. In addition to drawing on it for its words of wisdom, he takes interest in its verbal techniques---its selection of words, its use of comparison as a method of statement". They appear like prophecies, they must be interpreted. Lack of interpretation of proverbs is one of the barriers in effective political communication in Nigeria. For example, at campaign rally in Ikono local Government of Akwa Ibom State, the Leader of the party in power said that "ukemeke ndidoro ke enyong eto nto ata ye ofum" (one cannot stay on top of a tree to challenge the wind). Apart from that this proverb is open to many interpretations, what was obvious was that the "air" is the party in power while the "man on top of the tree" is the opposition party ready to be blown away by the wind.

Idioms

Idioms are phrasal constructions or verbal expressions closely associated with a given language. Africans, especially Nigerians, enjoy the use of idioms in everyday speech, (Omozuwa & Ezejideaku, 2009). Fromkin and Rodman (1988, p. 236) believe that by "knowing a language includes knowing the morphemes, simple words, compound words, and their meanings. In addition, it means knowing fixed phrases, consisting of more than one word, with meanings that cannot be inferred from the meanings of the individual words. The usual semantic rules for combining meanings do not apply. Such expressions are called idioms". For example, "The

problems of the people of Uyo go beyond the issue of neglect by the government. The issue is that the people made the mistake of putting their eggs in one basket. They have been in the same party for eight years.” This was an idiomatic expression from an opposition candidate on why Uyo is neglected, but not all indigenes of Uyo are in the government party.

Folktales

On the African continent, folktales and myths serve as a means of handing down traditions and customs from one generation to the next. The continent is full of rich, fertile legacy of folklore in form of storytelling tradition that has thrived for generations. At campaign rallies, many of the elderly politicians will relive the politics of the past in folktales which may not be in tune with what is at hand and may end up drawing an unpleasant comparison between the different epochs.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is often associated with deception or manipulation: the language used when someone is trying to hide the truth. Manipulative politicians and used car salesmen come to mind. We usually think first of overtly persuasive genres such as political campaign speeches, newspaper editorials, and advertisements as characteristic of rhetoric, but all sorts of texts have designs on their recipients. Our interest in rhetoric here is in what artful uses of language appear in the speech of a typical politician on campaign? Here, we are looking at ways the politicians turn language, or structure words and sentences in artful ways to capture the attention of the listener or reader and in doing this, communication between the speaker and the electorate is lost. However, because of the nature of language and the complexities of consciousness, speakers do not always say what they think. Their rhetorical acts exceed or fail to reflect perfectly their intentions. Our investigation showed that when a politician spoke eloquently and in most times, in impeccable English, the electorate considers his speech as ‘grammar’ or ‘rhetoric’. The general chorus will be “him sabi book well well, na grammar we ko chop?” (He is too educated. Will we eat his grammar?) The meaning here is clear. The electorate consider the educated as people who are never close to the grassroots, and so may not be willing to satisfy their yearnings for development.

Selected Register

Register is simply the range of vocabulary; grammar used by speakers in particular social circumstances or professional contexts. A register is also a variety of language distinguished according to use. All human activities require the use of language, and these activities are of diverse nature. Many of them are connected with professions, jobs, games or plain leisure. Wardhaugh (2006, p. 52) defines register as “sets of language item associated with discreet occupational or social groups”.

Edo (2013, p. 172) observes that “the register of politics, because of the nature of politics, might not be as exclusive as that of nuclear science, medicine or engineering, since politics admits people from all other fields. What was noted however, was that most of the register were names of objects and issues in common usage but which had another meaning altogether in the field of politics. Moreover, since most of the politicians are recruited from motor park touts, the language of motor parks comes handy as a political register”. Wordings like “carry-go” became popular slogan in the state’s politicking to mean “be ready to surmount whatever circumstances will bar you from winning the election”. Another example of register is “if it becomes necessary, please wedge vote”.

To 'wedge vote' simply means sharing of the unused ballot papers among political parties with the party with the highest vote taking a larger percent of the unused votes. Some of the registers of politics by Edo (2013, p. 173) are:

Dividends of Democracy

Edo (2013, p. 175) considers it as "a share of profits paid to people who own parts of a company or to winners in the football pool". This seemingly discovered itself as a prolific language used during politicking by Nigerian fourth political generation. It is an inherent belief in the politicians' minds. More obviously, provision of political aggrandizements or amenities to voters, in this category of image laundering, which is always deduced into demand for political negotiation (bribery).

Pure Water

It is synonymous to sachet water. In this case, as a register of politicking, it remains an embracive usage. Here, the Ibibio slang has a suitable replacement for this subject. The subject is culled as 'ndia' (food). Politicians often say "do your job, there will be pure water", meaning, there are juiciest and mouth watering gifts as rewards in doing a good job. It could be in edible items, cash and overall political aggrandizement, including social, economical and political securities.

Clean-up

It is a condition whereby political parties financially attract the agents of other political parties at polling units on Election Day. This is naturally done on the eve of the actual voting; cash will be allocated on specific instructions for bribing all the agents of other parties so as to allow opportunities for rigging in the elections.

Advanced Papers

It simply stands for election materials illegally given out with the connivance of the electioneering umpires for advanced rigging by contesting parties, one day to the voting date. This is against official regulations. These electioneering materials will be thump-printed at their convenience and rebranded as already used balloted materials during electioneering dates.

Figures of Speech

Edo (2013, p. 100) says that "figures of speech are the various rhetorical uses of language that depart from the customary construction, order or significance, that is, the use of a word diverging from its usual meaning". According to Awonusi (2003, p. 93), "figures of speech are used as rhetorical devices especially when politicians are confronted with abstract concepts which are difficult to explain for the easy understanding of the layman. Figures of speech are used to present the concepts as concrete images that can be understood easily". This attitude varies from one culture to another. Of the many figures of speech, two stood out in all the campaigns we attended: metaphor and euphemisms.

Ndimele (1997, p. 35) says a metaphor is "the imaginative use of a word or phrase to describe someone or something as another object to show that they have the same qualities and to make the description more forceful". Barnwell (1980, p. 101) says that metaphors involve three major parts;

a. The topic, that is, the actual thing which is talked about

- b. The illustration, that is, the thing to which the topic is compared
- c. The point(s) of similarity, that is, the components of meaning which the topic and the illustration have in common when compared.

On April 12, 2011, at the Uyo township stadium, a campaign coordinator made a statement: “Senator John James Akpanudoedehe, the lion of Judah. He conquered as a Chairman of Uyo Local Government, he conquered in the Senate. He conquered at the Federal Capital Territory. He is ready and willing to conquer Akwa Ibom State”. According to Omozuwa and Ezejideaku, (2009) “euphemism entails disguising whatever is intrinsically ugly, repulsive, immoral or, otherwise, unacceptable in more attractive, less offensive or neutral labels.” Though at everyday level, it is considered simple politeness and civilized conduct, in the hands of politicians, euphemism is used as a sinister device to deceive and indoctrinate the public into accepting things which are intrinsically repugnant or contrary to the national interest, (Abdullahi-Idiagbon, 2010).

Hahn (1989, p. 112) explains that euphemism is central to political language in a number of ways:

- (i) Euphemisms make situations that are intolerable seem tolerable, thus lessening our inclination to act to change them
- (ii) Problems are explained too simply, leading us to accept oversimplified solutions
- (iii) Euphemistic inaccuracies lead to inappropriate solution

He concludes that euphemisms mask reality and when combined with generalizations and oversimplifications, political language can become problematic if not deceitful. At the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) Governorship campaigns in Uyo stadium on April 12, 2011, the State Chairman of the party, Aniekan Akpan said thus; “Akwa Ibom State has received over one point four trillion naira in four years. Akwa Ibom State money is now in the hands of one family”. An indirect interpretation of this statement was that four years, the incumbent governor’s family was feeding from Akwa Ibom State’s federal allocations.

Word Coinage

The use of word formation (coinages) falls under what Edo (2013, p. 180) calls “theatre in political communication”. It is simply the creative use of language to facilitate effective communication in political campaign speeches. Word coinage is the process of formation and the addition of new words in the lexicon of a language without necessarily going through the process of affixation. New words may also enter the lexicon in other ways, like clipping, abbreviation, reduplication, acronym, compounding, blending etc while some are created outright for a particular purpose, as it is often the case at political campaign rallies. A politician who creates and uses them at campaign rallies will stand out. Examples of word coinages are; -stomach infrastructure; Etangekak; Ndia; Heaven eyetimere; Digital governor; nyem eland sekem (I want to leave office safely).

Religion/Euphoria and Political Interplay

At many campaign rallies, politicians will whip the emotion of the electorate to proactive mood. Many a times, *Bible* portions are often employed and misinterpreted. For example Roman (13:1) approves that “there is no authority but as established by God” misinterpreted for “God has already established PDP as the government in Akwa Ibom State, and so shall it be at the elections”. *Biblically*, 1 Corinthian 4: 20, affirms that “for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power”. This was misinterpreted as “for the kingdom of God is not in ACN, but in power---, power to the

people---PDP". 1 Corinthian 7: 20 chronicles another biblical portion as "let every man abide in the same calling where he was called". The misinterpreted version favored the ruling party (PDP) as "if you were called to be a bus conductor, if your father was called to be a bus conductor, why do you (Senator Udoedehe of ACN, father maintains a transport company in Uyo) should leave that to come and contest for the governorship position of the state?" Another Biblical passage states "as for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord" meant to imply that: "as for me and my family, we shall vote PDP". A regularly used portion was "by their fruits, ye shall know them. By sending thugs to burn down government property at the state secretariat, you have now known what they will do when in government". What was also noticeable at campaigns was that most of the politicians claimed that God sent them to contest elections and to win same. It became confusing when two or more people claim God sent all of them to the same office.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers concluded that this research was also influenced by bilingualism and cultural attributes. Bilingualism, according to Olaoye (1998, p. 114) taking it as "the ability to speak two languages which are spoken with equal competence for all purposes in the life of the bilinguals". And this leads to the issue of code mixing and code switching. The two common feature of bilingualism is code switching and code mixing. According to Olaoye (1998, p. 135) "whereas code switching is the bilingual's ability to choose one or the other of his two languages in a particular speech situation, code mixing is the use of one or more languages for consistent transfer into another, and by such a language mixture, developing a new restricted or not so restricted code of linguistic interaction". . At campaign rallies, a politician will speak in English, switch over to Ibibio and ends up in Pidgin, all in one speech event, without minding the language background of the electorate.

While the culture of the people as linguistic barrier in political communication was noted in Ikono Local Government of Akwa Ibom State. The people made it abundantly clear that you cannot address them in any other language except in the Ibibio language. They claim that as the cradle of the Ibibio race, to do otherwise is to invoke the wrath of the gods. Non speakers had to make do with interpreters with its attendant bogus translations. Moreover, the concept of 'contribution' as an economic system in our culture is well known. We heard at campaign rallies that "in the last election, we contributed votes for your son's success. It is now time for you to contribute to us. Politics is contribution". The concept of 'contribution' denotes an economic system whereby members of a specific group, body or society contribute money monthly or quarterly to each other or to the group for specific objectives. To equate the complex issue of electoral campaigns in a democracy to a mere economic activity belittles the issue of election and democracy.

This study has revealed the extent to which politicians will go to showcase their language prowess in right or wrong manners at campaign rallies. The study has shown that the language of political campaigns was rarely studied in political communication because the environment we found ourselves in the last forty years did not support such effort. We have seen that politics in Nigeria is still in its infancy and it is the only profession now that admits all, thus the language of political campaigns is a mixed grill of the gutter to the sublime.

We took a look at literacy and saw that it is the ability to interpret or negotiate understanding within any mode of communication. Literacy barriers in political communication included education or lack of it, use of bombastic words to achieve self importance or showcase one's academic achievements, use of fallacies and mistranslations. We also see that in linguistic barriers to political communication, ambiguity and vagueness in words and utterances play a major role as constraints to effective political communication

In the Akwa Ibom State cultural domain, there are places you cannot communicate except in the language of the immediate community which definitely needs to be looked into. Also significant here is the issue of bilingualism with its twin features of code switching and code mixing. The use of two or more languages in a single speech event can be confusing and frustrating to the electorate, especially when some of the codes cannot be interpreted at the speech event. The paper concludes that there is need for the modernization of aspects of our culture especially as it affects language usage at political campaigns to enable our politicians to effectively communicate their intentions to the electorate while in office

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