

**BEING POLITICALLY IMPOLITE: A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COFP)
ANALYSIS OF INVECTIVE SONGS OF WESTERN NIGERIAN POLITICIANS**

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ABSTRACT: *Earlier studies on the language of political discourse have been focused on the theoretical bases of relational and face works with little emphasis on impoliteness. (Mullany, 2002:1). Also, scanty works that are specific exist on the pragmatic analysis of impoliteness in invective songs of politicians in south-western part of Nigeria. Hence, the present study explores the selected invective songs of Western Nigerian politicians, utilizing a modified version of Community of Practice framework (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992) as a pragmatic tool in analyzing the data. Fourteen randomly sampled invective songs of western Nigerian politicians were selected for the study through participant's information. Our findings revealed that the invective songs of western Nigerian politicians are characterized by impolite utterances, politic confrontational behaviour, belligerent utterances, lexical borrowing, code-mixing, Implicative, turn-taking, use of paralanguage, imagery and symbolism. The paper concludes that the modified version of Community of Practice (CofP) theory clearly explicates the meaning and significances of political invective songs in Nigerian Southwest, and clearly showcases the intentions of the participants and the force of the utterances.*

KEYWORDS: Impoliteness, Invective song, Community of practice (CofP), Political language, Western Nigerian politicians.

INTRODUCTION

Several approaches have been used in carrying out linguistic studies on political discourse, gender and media discourse. For instance, Lakoff (1975) employed the pragmatic tool of politeness theory to state that women are more linguistically polite than their male counterparts. Other works on politeness study include Brown and Levinson (1987), Holmes (1995), Watts (1989, 1992, 2003), Odebunmi (2002, 2003, 2006), Thomas (1995) besides others. Apart from Watts (1992, 2003) and Mullany (2002) several literatures that exist on politeness phenomenon have neglected a vital aspect of linguistic study, which is the concept of impoliteness and aggressive utterances in political discourse (Mullany 2002:1). Previous works on language, gender and politeness centred on over-reliance on Brown and Levinson's model. However, the Wattsonian and Lockerman theory of relational work has been employed to show that there exist marked and unmarked behaviour in human utterances. Marked behaviour is an utterance which is seen to be politic. However, the weaknesses in both Brown and Levinson's model and Watts and Locker's theory make Odebunmi (2006) to postulate that the concepts of politeness and relational work lack real cross-cultural consistency.

In this work, we shall employ a modified version of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) Community of Practice (CofP) theory in analyzing 14 randomly selected invective songs of Western Nigerian politicians to gauge the speaker's intention and the force of these

utterances. Hence, it is essential to briefly explicate the terrain of politics and political language in Nigerian southwest.

Terrain of Political Language in Nigerian Southwest

Nigerian political campaign is often characterized by violence, killings, rivalries, etc. According to Yusuf, (2007), "In politics, peace is relative, since politics is unacceptably competitive or contentious, any action which has a lower potential to result in acrimony or conflict would be regarded as 'peaceful.'" The above statement shows that politics in Nigerian southwest is violently competitive. Hence, the southwestern Nigeria has been given a damning epithet "wild, wild, west" in Nigerian politics. According to Fairclough (1989:4), "politics is concerned with power, the power to make decisions, to control resources, to control people's behaviour, and often to control their values." Politics is inevitably concerned with power while power could be attained through the employment of language to persuade or to coerce the audience. In political language, implicature is often used to convince or persuade the audience. Implicature allows the audience to make assumptions about the existence of information not made explicit in what is actually said (Thomas, Linda et al 1999:35).

In Nigerian Southwest, language is used in political context as slogans (Yusuf 2007) e.g. (i) "PDP, power to the people!" (ii) "Labour Party! Forward ever!!" (iii) "AC! Democracy for Ever!!" (iv) "ANPP! ANPP!! One Nigeria!!!" Also, language is as well used as symbols e.g. "umbrella" for PDP, Maize Cob represents ANPP etc (Yusuf, 2007). In southwestern political terrain, songs are employed to praise the political leaders. For instance, when Ex-Governor Ladoja of Oyo state won the controversial case over his illegal impeachment and was paying "thank you" visit to the house of Late Chief Alayande at Ibadan, it was relayed on N.T.A news on how his supporters were singing the following song to praise him:

"Ladoja maa juru, ibo re ti poju" meaning "Ladoja, keep on dancing, you have got 1 large crowd of supporters."

In the same vein, invective songs are employed to cause acrimony, conflict and confusion (Yusuf, 2007). For instance, when the late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo lost his legal battle to ex-president Shehu Shagari in the notorious twelve-two-third judgment in September 1979, where Chief Richard Akinjide acted as Shagari's advocate, supporters of the defunct National Party of Nigeria (N.P.N) took to the streets of Ibadan singing the following invective song:

"Akinjide b'omi pa /2x

Awolowo tan'na esu ka'le

Akinjide b'omi pa"

Meaning: "Akinjide used water to quench /2x

The evil light kindled by Awolowo

Akinjide quenched it."

The singing of this song by the N.P.N loyalists in Ibadan led to mayhem, violence and killings in the city.

Apart from the foregoing, in southwestern Nigerian politics, vague and ambiguous language is often employed by politicians to create semantic escape route (Yusuf, 2007). When southwestern Nigerian politicians employ ambiguous expressions, they are doing what Garrett Hardin (cf Yusuf, 2007) described as “pre-emptively contending with the possible misunderstanding utterance.” Face-threatening act with redress are often utilized by southwestern Nigerian politicians so as not to upset their audience (Yusuf, 2007) For instance, The African Guardian reporter who interviewed Late Chief M.K.O. Abiola in July 11, 1998 issue of this magazine described Abiola that Abiola has “a very healthy appetite towards women” (Yusuf 2007). The above euphemism was employed by this journalist not to offend Late Chief Abiola who was tactfully described as being promiscuous because of his polygamous life.

Politeness and CoffP Phenomena: A Theoretical Framework

Politeness, as a pragmatic concept, has gained the linguists’ scholarly attention within the last thirty years (Babatunde & Adedimeji, 2006). It was initially theorized by Goffman (1967) before Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) gave it a full-blown relevance in universal language. Brown and Levinson (1987) centralized and revolved round the concept of face, which refers to ‘the public self-image of a person’ and the “emotional and social feeling of self which an individual has an expects others to recognize” (Yule 1996:60, Odebunmi 2003, Adegbite and Odebunmi 2004). There are positive face and negative face. Adegbija (1989) explains that the positive face satisfies a speaker’s need for approval and belonging while negative face serves to minimize the imposition of face-threatening act. Positive face, according to Odebunmi A. (2006) occurs “when an individual desires to be liked, approved of, respected and appreciated, while negative face, according to him, is staged “When the individual desires freedom from imposition by others.” Politeness lubricates the “wheel” towards making smooth human relations and avoids whatever can ruin another person’s face (Odebunmi, 2006:6).

Brown and Levinson (1987) also explicate the face-saving and face-threatening acts. A person’s face is saved “when the person’s face wants are met,” while the person’s face is threatened when the opposite of this occurs. Also, face threatening acts are illocutionary acts that can damage or threaten an individual’s positive or negative face (Odebunmi 2002, 2006). Brown and Levinson (1987) continued by explicating the off-record strategy. The “off-record strategy, according to them enables a speaker to avoid responsibility for performing an F.T.A. either by inviting conversational implicatures or by being deliberately vague or ambiguous” (Mullany 2002:3). On the other hand, if an on record strategy is chosen, a speaker can either perform FTA without redressive action, known as “going baldly on record,” or he can perform the FTA with redressive action. That is, speaker “s” pays attention to hearer “H”’s face needs when he performs an FTA with redressive action (Odebunmi 2002, Mullany 2002:3).

However, as relevant as Brown and Levinson (1987) is in pragmatic analysis of communicative utterances, it has been extensively criticized by linguists. According to Harris (2001:452), Brown and Levinson (1987) concentrate only on short stretches of talk. Also, Mills (cf Mullany 2002:3) states that “politeness needs to be viewed as something that emerges at discourse level over stretches of talk instead of something that is grafted on to individual speech acts.” In the same vein, Mullany (2002:3) states that Brown and Levinson’s theory focuses on interaction in formal contexts while politeness in institutional contexts has been neglected. According to Odebunmi (2006:6), Brown and Levinson’s

theory “does not give consideration to the fact that cultures and situations vary; does not consider the time and the way to use rules and maxim of politeness proposed; assumes that particular expressions have politeness and impoliteness inherent in them; concentrates on utterances rather than connected discourse, and cannot handle aggressive situations.” Despite these criticisms, politeness principle has been successfully used in myriads of natural languages. Yet, this theory could not be sufficient for our present study as a result of the neglect of the concept of impoliteness and confrontational discourse.

Brown and Levinson’s negligence of linguistic impoliteness has also been condemned by Eelen (2001:92) thus: “politeness and impoliteness are two sides of a coin, and therefore any theory that pretends to say something valuable about one side, automatically needs to deal with the other side as well.” Also, Culpeper (1996:350 cf Mullany 2002:3) states that “in order for a theory of politeness to be comprehensive, it is integral that the topic of linguistic impoliteness is addressed.” In the words of Thomas (1995:171), Brown and Levinson have neglected the fact that there are occasions where speakers perform utterances that are “deliberately to be maximally offensive.”

In the light of this, efforts need to be made to provide a theoretical approach to politeness that incorporates both politeness and impoliteness. Watts (1989, 1992, 2003), Kasper (1990), Locker (2004), and Locker and Watts (2005) have carried out linguistic research to fill the vacuum or existing holes in Brown and Levinson’s theory. According to Locker and Watts (2005 cf Odeunmi 2006:8), relational work refers to work individuals invest in negotiating relationship with others. Relational work is broader in scope than face-work. This concept, as stated earlier, has marked and unmarked behaviour. Odeunmi (2006) employed a modified version of relational work to examine politic, polite and impolite utterances in print media political interviews in selected Nigerian news magazines.

Also, Harris (2001) explains that Brown and Levinson’s theory has a vast amount of criticism since they erroneously aimed at generalizing politeness principles to cover different cultures. Politeness research need to confine itself to certain, specific contexts which have some well defined commonalities (Kasper 1990:213 cf Mullany 2002:4). Harris utilizes the Communities of Practice (C of P) approach to analyze impoliteness in the discourse strategies of British politicians in the specific context of Prime Minister’s Question Time.

C of P approach has been employed to negate dichotomizing male and female speech patterns. For instance, Culpeper (1996) applies impoliteness framework to the discourse of army officers in a documentary on female recruits. Culpeper (1996:359) states that impoliteness characterizes the army life. Mills (cf Mullany 2002:5) argues that Holmes’ (1995) definition of “polite people,” that is female speakers’ cannot be generated. He argues that not all female speakers could be polite. Hence, we need to often relate our concept of polite and impoliteness to specific context or a specific speech community.

According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992:91) researchers should stop seeing differences between male and female speech patterns and linguistic research should focus on “a more serious investigation of the relations among language, gender and other components of social identity.” Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992b:464) defines C of P as an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. It also refers to ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations and practices that emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. Communities of Practice (C of P), according to Mullany (2002:5) often develop out of formal or informal enterprises and they range in

size and quality. They also can survive the changes or migration in membership. Also, individuals access to Communities of Practice is often linked or related to social identities like age, class, status, race etc.

Ehrlich (1999) applied C of P approach to the constructed setting of courtroom discourse in a language and gender study examining sexual harassment. Mullany (2002) has also employed C of P approach to analyze impoliteness, interview on BBC between John Humphreys and Hilary Armstrong. In this research, it could be deduced that it is the female interviewee, Hilary, who accuses her male interviewer of impolite behaviour towards her. In this study, a modified version of CofP model was employed in analyzing the invective songs of Western Nigerian politicians.

Political Invective Songs As Community Of Practice (CofP)

In Nigerian southwest invective songs are often used by politicians in their rallies and campaigns against their opposition party members. Invective songs, in southwestern Nigerian social context refers to songs, common in local communities, which are employed to reprimand, condemn and ridicule people. In Yoruba oral poetry, invective songs are employed in specific occasions such as songs employed by wives in polygamous homes, songs used to lampoon a tyrannical kings and songs utilized to condemn disgruntled elements in the society (Lamidi 2002). In Western Nigerian political campaigns and rallies, invective songs are employed by members of different political parties not only to hurt but also to ridicule and condemn their opponents. In these songs, singers observe turn-taking signal in order to respond to offensive and impolite songs directed against them by their political opponents. There also exists a shared knowledge among participants in these invective songs. Such shared knowledge may be cultural, traditional, communal, personal (i.e. involving individuals) or social. This enables the singers of Western Nigerian Political Invective Songs (WNPIS) to always use pragmatic implicatures and presuppositions in their songs. The singers of WNPIS often make an assumption that songs will easily be understood by their opponents, without challenge, as a result of their shared social, cultural and communal backgrounds.

Besides, participants in political invective songs use imagery, symbolism, paralanguage, and indirect speech acts to attack their butt or political opponents. In some other occasions participants in political invective songs employ direct speech acts to butt their opponents. Louise Mullany (2002) in re-assessing impoliteness, language and gender in BBC political broadcast interviews explains that disagreement, impoliteness, verbal confrontations, challenges and competition should incorporate the Communities of Practice (CofP) model to oppose Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) view that only peaceful co-existence, mutual support, harmonious relation should be properties of CofP. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), CofP should incorporate confrontational discourse. He argues that the process of mutual engagement can be either harmonious or conflictual and the word "community" in CofP can have both 'positive' and 'negative' connotations. Mullany (2002) then proposed to redefine CofP as a Synthetic Community of practice in order to account for discourse that occurs in constructed contexts.

In the present study, Communities of Practice shall be utilized to explain the Wenger's joint negotiated enterprise' in the verbal confrontations and adjacency pair which exist in the invective songs of Western Nigeria. The participants in political invective songs occasionally confront one another in their rallies and campaign and not only clash but render

impolite chants of which they all have joint resources for negotiating meaning. The concept of Communities of Practice (CofP) is modified in this study. Context is central in this proposed modification of C of P. Contexts or situations of employment of C of P in Western Nigerian Political Invective Songs (WNPIS) are controlled by Socio-cultural Beliefs (SB), Power Relations (PR) and Communal Values (CV). It has been discovered from our data that the invectives songs of the western Nigerian politicians are characterized by impoliteness; politic confrontational behaviour (Odeunmi, 2006), (i.e. PCB); imagery and symbolism (ImaS); paralinguistic cues; turn-taking, lexical borrowing, among others. These are presented in the following modified model of Community of Practice (CofP):

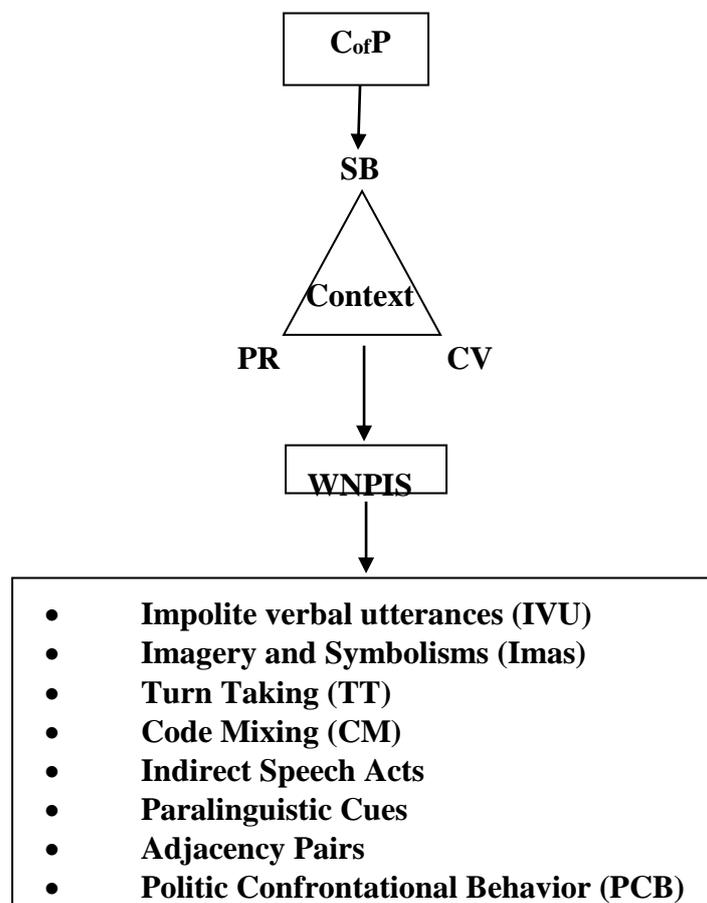


Figure 1: Community of Practice (C of P) in Western Nigerian Political Invective Songs (WNPIS)

Figure 1 above shows participants' shared contexts of interactions. This includes: shared social and cultural beliefs, shared knowledge of power-relations and political ideologies and shared communal values. These contextual backgrounds enable the interactants in the discourse to produce impolite verbal utterances, politic confrontational behaviour, indirect and direct speech acts, etc. The participants in invective songs of western Nigerian politicians employ imagery, symbolism, paralinguistic cues and also turn taking in their confrontational discourse and communicative utterances.

Meanwhile, it is expedient to explain our methodology. Data were gathered through participant's information. The songs were tape-recorded, transcribed and translated. Out of

the recorded 20 invective songs, fourteen were randomly selected for our analysis. The geographical spread of the songs covered the south-western Nigeria: Oyo, Lagos, Ekiti, Ondo, Osun and Ogun States. The following analysis illustrates the features of modified version of C_{of}P in the Figure 1 above and discusses their pragmatic implications and perlocutionary forces.

Impoliteness and Political Invective Songs

Harris (2001), in her expression of being adversarial or impolite in political language explains that political discourse is often garnished with belligerent and confrontational utterances. In the same token, political invective songs in western Nigeria are characterized with the following features:

Politic Confrontational Behaviour

In politic verbal behaviour (Odebunmi, 2006) confrontations occur. Our findings reveal that in the discourse of political invective songs in western Nigeria, participants always flout the rule of face saving (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and physically confront their butt, their political opponents and others who criticized them without minding whose ox is gored. For instance, the following song was rendered by members of People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Ogbomoso, Nigeria, in February 2006 against the King of this ancient town.

Example 1: *“Bi won bay o Ladoja ewo l’ejo yin /2x
Agba ofofo aamebo,
Bi won bay o Ladoja, ewo l’ejo yin”*

Meaning: *“If they’ve impeached Ladoja
What concerns you /2x
An elderly talebearer
If they impeached Ladoja
What concerns you?”*

Background: Senator Ladoja was a former Governor of Oyo State of Nigeria who was unconstitutionally impeached by his deputy, Otunba Alao-Akala, a native of Ogbomoso. The above song was then directed against Shoun, the king of this town who was then reluctant in supporting an unconstitutional removal of Ladoja. The PDP youths who were on rampage bombarded Shoun of Ogbomoso’s palace chanting the above invective song.

Indirect Speech Act: In the above song, indirect speech act was employed since the name of the butt, Shoun of Ogbomoso, was not stated. Despite this, the butt was able to deduce the locution of the politic verbal utterance. The force of this utterance made the butt, Shoun, to order his palace guard and police to disperse the participants in this political invective song.

Besides, politic confrontational behaviour in invective songs permits the interactants to flout the norms by being aberrant in their confrontational utterances against Shoun, a highly respected and honoured King not only in his town but in Nigeria. The diction employed in the song shows the interactants’ deviant and belligerent acts not only to their butt, Shoun, but also against the norms and values. The shared background between the participants in this song and the intended audience (Shoun) permits the commoners to employ politic context to use invectives like “An elderly tale bearer” to butt their king without any negative effects.

Example 2: *“Alagbara ma mero baba ole
A o gbo 'do gbo pawa, lenu yin mo”*

Meaning: *“You who are powerful, but lack discretion
Let's never hear you say 'power!' again.”*

The above invective songs were rendered at the launching of Action Congress Gubernatorial Campaign in Ibadan in February 24, 2007. The song was directed to deride People's Democratic Party (PDP) whose political slogan is “Power to the People” and is often shortened as ‘Power!’ The song was employed to accuse members of PDP of their irrationality, indiscretion and hooliganism. After the launching of this campaign, this invective song became widespread not only in Ibadan but throughout the southwestern Nigeria. The force of this utterance also led to violent clashes of AC and PDP supporters. Another example of politic confrontational behaviour were songs rendered at Ikoyi-Ile, Oyo State by supporters of Honourable Sunday A., Alalade who is a grassroots political leader in that zone at the launching of his electioneering campaign for the post of Federal House of Representative thus:

Example 3: *“Alalade yoo wo 'le asofin
E se woo
Ke ma baa ku sori ejo
E se woo”*

Meaning: *“Alalade shall be victorious in Reps election
Kindly be warned
So as not to die over election petition
Kindly be warned”*

In the above politic verbal utterance, invective song was used to warn and scold Alalade's opponents. The perlocutionary force of this utterance made the opposition party against Alalade who represented the Labour Party (LP) to flee since the participants in this invective song outnumbered their butt.

Paralinguistic Cues

According to Abercrombie (1973:34), paralanguage refers to the way a message is disseminated without a spoken apparatus. Overall meaning of written or spoken discourse cannot be inferred from the linguistic channel alone, the extra-verbal elements (e.g. use of emblems, signs, body movement, posters) are essential tools in human communication. These paralinguistic cues can be in form of proxemics or kinesics (Abercrombie, 1974:33).

In invective songs of western Nigerian politicians, paralanguage in form of emblems symbols, body gesture are often employed. Each political party has symbol. Umbrella represents the symbol of PDP, broom is that of AC while maize cob is the symbol of All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP). Whenever they are on political campaign or rally, western Nigerian politicians raise-up flags and emblems of their party and sing invective songs to accuse their political opponents. For instance, PDP whose logo is umbrella often proud through their invective song thus:

Example 4: *“Alaburada l'egbe wa /2x
PDP l'egbe wa*

*Awa ki maa, awa ki mai segbe akoyan rin
Alaburada l'egbe wa."*

Meaning: "Our party's logo is umbrella /2x
PDP is our party
We are not party of labourers
Our party's logo is Umbrella."

The above song was rendered when Governor Agagu launched his gubernatorial campaign in Akure, Ondo State. The song was directed against Dr. Olusegun Mimiko who joined the Labour Party as a gubernatorial candidate. The pragmatic implicature and indirect speech act in this song is that "Labour Party" was given the damning epithet "the party of labourers." The song was also rendered at the gubernatorial campaigns of Otunba Alao Akala of PDP Ibadan, Shaki and Ogbomoso to deride Senator Rasheed Ladoja who they believed had lost PDP gubernatorial ticket. The emblem "umbrella" served as "immunity" which they got since they had the support of the presidency.

Example 5: "Olosi, otori owo w'egbe buruku, olosi
Awon enikan bayii! bayii! bayii!"

Meaning: "Wretched person!
He deflected to bad party for money's sake
Wretched person!
That person! That person! That person! Wretched person!"

The above invective song was rendered against those who left PDP to join other political parties in Ogun State of Nigeria when Gbena Daniel got PDP Gubernatorial Ticket. These people include Dipo Dina and Senator Amosun. In the same token, the song was rendered against those who left Action Congress (AC) for other political parties such as Labour Party and PPA in Lagos State. The song is always rendered with an accompaniment of music and body gesture (pointing). For instance, during the gubernatorial campaign rally of Akala in Ogbomoso, PDP youths in town rendered the song against Hon. Peter Odetomi (of ANPP) at Ayegun Street, a stone throw to the butt's family house. Also, the same song was also directed against Hon. Fatai Buhari who contested for the Senate post under Labour Party. The perlocutionary force of this utterance led to bloody-clashes of party loyalists of Senator Amosun and those of Gbenga Daniel in Abeokuta, and bloody political clash between Akala (PDP) and Ajimobi (ANPP) supporters in Ogbomoso. For instance, Odetomi (a Deputy-Governor contestant under ANPP) had to relocate to Ibadan as a result of the perlocutionary force of this political invective song for fear of being attacked.

Example 6: "E wi f'alejo ko lo
E fi sasara b'agbo"
(Raising up the broom, "AC" logo)

Meaning: "Tell the stranger to go
Put your broom inside the charm"
(Raising up the broom, "AC" logo)

The above song was rendered against the PDP at the launching of Action Congress (AC) campaign in Lagos by Senator Bola Tinubu, ex-governor of Lagos State. The logo of “AC” symbolizes cleansing in Yoruba cosmology. The AC party loyalists at their Lagos Rally in March, 2007 called PDP the following damning epithets: (i) “People’s Destruction Party” (ii) “Papa Deceiving Peter” referring to ex-governor Peter Odili who contested in PDP presidential Primary Election (Yusuf, 2007).

Example 7: *“E ma de’na de wa o
Igba esin, kii dena dowo
Owo baba esinsin.”*

Meaning: *“Don’t try to waylay us
Two hundred flies cannot waylay the broom
The broom is the father of flies.”*

Also, the above invective song was rendered by AC loyalists at the launching of their gubernatorial campaign at Ibadan in March, 2007. The indirect speech act in the song is that PDP symbolizes ‘flies’ while AC symbolizes ‘brooms’. AC violently attacked PDP of their alleged plan to rig Oyo Gubernatorial Election. The utilization of gesture with the song brought about the pragmatic force of violence and clashes between PDP and AC at Ibadan, Ogbomoso and Oke-Ogun.

Imagery and Symbolism

Invective songs of politicians in Nigerian South-west are also filled with imagery and symbolism. For instance, in example 7 above, PDP is referred to as ‘flies’ which symbolizes filth and dirt (in our society) while AC symbolizes ‘the broom’ which will be used to sanitize Nigerian society from social, moral and economic decadence. The shared beliefs which exist between the participants in the songs (in example seven) and their intended audience (PDP) led to pragmatic force of political squabble.

Apart from this, political slogans can be used as symbolism. For instance, Governor Oyinlola’s slogan is “Oyin ni o! Iyo!!” meaning: “He is the honey! He is the salt!!” The slogan was coined from Governor Oyinlola’s surname which starts with “Oyin,” that is “honey.” This makes the PDP supporters of Oyinlola to often employ politeness principle in the category of deference to praise Governor Oyinlola as “Oyin ni o!”

In his bid to capture Osun State, AC Gubernatorial Candidate, Engineer Rauf Aregbesola came out with a more symbolic slogan and invective song thus:

Example 8: *“Mo r’ohun to dun j’oyin lo /2x
Aregbesola dun j’oyin lo
Oranmiyan dun j’oyin lo
Mo r’ohun to dun j’oyin lo.”*

Meaning: *“I have got something sweeter than honey
Aregbesola is sweeter than honey
Oranmiyan is sweeter than honey*

I have got something sweeter than honey.”

In the above invective song, imagery and symbolism is employed. In this song, ‘Oyinlola’ as a ‘honey’ is sweet while Aregbesola which symbolizes ‘Oranmiyan’ is sweeter. The song was rendered to state that reformatory work which Aregbesola would do in Osun would be greater than that of Oyinlola, if given, the mandate.

Indirect Speech Act

Indirectness in utterances is often employed in the invective songs of politicians in Nigerian southwest. Examples of such could be found in Examples 5, and 6 above. The indirectness in speech employed could also be called Face Threatening Acts (FTA) with redress. The indirect speech act employed in Examples 5 and 6 above makes these invectives to be elastic and evasive in interpretation.

Impoliteness

Impoliteness used in invective songs of western Nigerian politicians are comparable to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) FTA without redress (or bald on record politeness). The participants in these invective songs directly attack their butt as in the following examples:

Example 9: *“E mo fi pawa pa wa
E mo fi pawa pa wa o
Ko si pawa, ko si pawa ilu awa
Emo fi pawa pa wa.”*

Meaning: *“Don’t kill us with power /2x
There is no power in our town
Don’t kill us with power.”*

The above song was coined by those who ‘‘carpet-crossed’’ from PDP to Labour Party and AC in Ondo and Oyo States of Nigeria. The one cited above was rendered by supporters of Honourable Adeleke ex-Chairman of Iseyin Local Government Area of Oyo State who deflected to Labour Party (AC) after Senator Ladoja could not get PDP ticket. At the launching of Labour Party and Action Congress at Iseyin this song was directed against PDP whose slogan is ‘‘Power.’’ Besides, they directly derided PDP of carnage, through the song. In the same token, the following invective song was used to ridicule Senator Bola Tinubu by PDP supporters at the launching of PDP campaign in Lagos State in March 6, 2007:

Example 10: *“O l’arun opolo, o l’arun opolo
Gomina to d’agbale oja
O l’arun opolo.”*

Meaning: *“He is out of his mind /2x
A governor who becomes a street sweeper
He is mentally deranged.”*

The AC logo is broom. Governor Tinubu was indirectly derided as a street sweeper for often moved out to campaign with broom. The perlocutionary force in this song led to political clashes in Lagos.

Example 11: “Ajimobi ma mikan koro loo w’ole /2x

Ko d’igba te ba nfa poster ya /2x

Ajimobi ma mikan koro loo wole.”

Meaning: “Ajimobi don’t worry

You will surely win /2x

(Pointing) Why are you destroying the posters?

Ajimobi don’t worry

You will surely win.”

Senator Ajimobi, ANPP candidate for Oyo State Governor while Honourable Remi Odetomi was his deputy. PDP supporters of Akala felt that Ajimobi must not launch his campaign in Akala’s hometown, Ogbomoso. Hence, Ajimobi’s loyalists rendered this song to deride those who were destroying Ajimobi’s billboards and posters in Ogbomoso.

The perlocutionary force of this song made Akala supporters to take the streets chanting the following songs to deride the ANPP members:

Example 12: “O ko wo lo ko won de o

Oko wo lo ko won de

Ara oko w’olu o, o ntele l’ogido, oko wo lo ko won de?”

Meaning: “Which vehicle carried them here /2x

The rustic villagers are here walking disorderly

Which vehicle carried them here?”

In the above invectives, ANPP supporters were called “rustic villagers” by the PDP since they felt that they were in the base of their gubernatorial candidate. The force of this song led to bloody political feud.

Adjacency Pairs and Turn Takings

Adjacency pair and turn takings often occur when participants in invective songs of western Nigerian politicians confront one another in their political rallies. The adjacency pairs are exchange structures that are reciprocal and complimentary (Osisanwo 2003:14). The adjacency pairs which exist in invective songs of western Nigerian politicians are in form of question versus answer. For instance, Example 12 is the invective song rendered by PDP supporters against those of ANPP in Example 11. Also, in Eruwa, Oyo state, the AC and the PDP members sang the following invective songs against each other when they met during their March 2007 political rally at Sango Area, Eruwa, Oyo State.

Example 13**PDP:** *“Ibo ote yi di power to power**Power! Power!! Power!!!**(with body gesture)***Meaning:** *“This year’s election will be force to force!**Power! Power! Power!”***AC:** *Alagbara ma mero baba ole**A o gbodo gbo pawa lenu yin mo***Meaning:** *“You who have power but lack
discretion never we hear you
say power again”*

The PDP in the above Example 13 was trying to demonstrate their physical and political power since they not only control the Federal Government of Nigeria but also had the resources needed to ‘win’ the elections. AC supporters who met them responded thus: “Those of you who have power but lack discretion. Let us not hear you say ‘power’ again.”

From the above adjacency pair, it could deduced that AC members reacted to deride the PDP that they lacked discretion. The perlocutionary force of the confrontational utterances between PDP and AC explained above led to violence, carnage and destruction of properties.

Use of Code-Mixing

Code-mixing also occurs in invective songs of western Nigerian politicians. This could be deduced from Example 13:

*“Ibo ote yi di power to power**Power! Power!! Power!!!”*

The participants in this utterance and their intended audience shared the belief that PDP that controls Federal Government could use the federal might to rig the election. The pragmatic force in the above utterance led AC supporters to respond as explained before by singing to accuse the PDP that “they are powerful but lack discretion.” Also, in the following example code-mixing is employed.

Example 14: *“Egbe alagbado l’egbe wa o**ANPP l’egbe wa**A ki maa, a ki mai segbe jaguda. ANPP legbe wa.”***Meaning:** *The maize cob is our symbol**ANPP is our party**We are not party of thieves**ANPP is our party.”*

From the above Example 14, the word ANPP was used borrowed from L₂ into L₁. The word “ANPP” is an acronym from “All Nigerian People’s Party”

CONCLUSION

By and large, our findings have shown that participants in political invective songs and their butts often share common backgrounds which make the audience to easily decode the pragmatic implicature in the songs. Also, we have discovered that invective songs of politicians in southwestern Nigeria are characterized by impolite verbal behaviours, politic verbal utterances, imagery, symbolism, adjacency pairs, turn takings, code-mixing, indirect speech acts and employment of paralinguistic cues. The study opens the studies into politeness and impoliteness in invective songs of politicians. Future enquiries can explore the campaign speeches of Nigerian politicians to examine the politeness and impoliteness in those speeches. A cross-cultural examination of politeness and impoliteness in campaign speeches of African, American, and European politicians can also be carried out in such research.

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