AN ECOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SPEECHES ON CLIMATE CHANGE BY PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI

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Abstract

Given the increasing ecological crises in Nigeria, this study discursively investigates framings in selected speeches on Climate Change by President Muhammadu Buhari, with a view to revealing the discursive construal with which human subjects are framed and projected in relation to environmental issues. The data consist of Buhari's speeches on Climate Change from May, 2015 to May, 2022. The study is undergirded by Stibbe's theoretical postulations of 'Stories We Live By' in ecolinguistics, with a focus on framings. The findings reveal that President Buhari deployed discursive frames of ecocentricism, anthropogenesis, anthropomorphism and eco-futurism – discourse structures that project Self-alignment with eco-friendliness. Sampled discursive configurations also reveal that Buhari explicitly projects leaders of Third-world countries, including himself, with the frame of mendicant identity, especially in matters connected with human-to-nature relations. By analysing these underlying discursive frames, the study argues that Buhari's discursive constructions instantiate the intrinsic worth of natural environments as life-supporting and life-sustaining mechanisms, and are worthy of immense human considerations. Discursively recognising the intrinsic worth in nature is thus a 'story' deployed by Buhari to place responsibilities of nurturing, protecting and sustaining the environments on humans, as parts of the natural world, rather than advocate asymmetric power relations between human and non-human species, and continuing ecological consumerism.

Keywords: Muhammadu Buhari; Ecolinguistics; Climate Change; Stories We Live By; Frames

Introduction

The ecological issues we are facing in the twenty-first century are increasing in propensity and frightening. Some of these recurrent environmental issues, occurring at different scales, include the gradual loss of biodiversity, sand storms, disappearance of homes and communities, food insecurity, desertification, unsettling weather patterns and climate change (Bouwer, 2019). In order for humans to overcome such ecological challenges, it is important to realise that the environments are, unarguably, indispensable parts of human lives and wildlife survival. Nurturing the environments would therefore enhance improved human conditions of living, while engaging in environmentally-damaging activities would, however, undermine a safe ecosystem that life depends on. Thus, how humans treat life-supporting ecosystems has undoubtedly far-reaching effects on both aspects of human life: wellbeing and survival.

At the centre of the environmental challenges are human-caused crises. Such human-made crises arise from activities and practises that damage basic life-support systems. Human activities and practices that, unarguably, cause incalculable harm to the natural environments in many regions of the earth include growing levels of pollution in water and air, open defecation, reckless sewage and waste disposals, destruction and depletion of irreplaceable natural resources, greenhouse gas emission and gradual extermination of species. These environmentally-damaging actions are tied to poverty, industrialisation and technological advances. What is needed now is fuller knowledge, increased awareness and wiser actions to exert common efforts towards the protection, preservation and sustenance of the ecosystems. Since there has been global apprehension about the life-supporting ecosystems, the concerns among scholars have been how language resources can be positively deployed to alter human behaviour, activities and practices towards the natural environment, in a way that promotes a healthy environment and enhances ecological sustenance (Trim, 1959; Haugen 1971, 2001).

Suffice it to mention here that language plays a fundamental role in human relations with nature. In other words, language can be deployed as a mechanism to motivate humans towards nurturing and protecting the environments. If we must resolve, and possibly, halt ecological challenges we are facing in the twenty-first century, language lies at the heart of human-to-nature relations. According to Stibbe (2015:2), "it is through language that the natural world is mentally reduced to objects or resources to be conquered, and it is through language that people can be encouraged to respect and care for the systems that support life." Thus, it is possible to transform social realities in the same language by which such realities have been disparaged and distorted. This notion gave impetus to the present study regarding relationships between *ecology* and *language*. Scholarly interests in the connection between language and ecology began in the late 20th century, a move that led to the emergence of a field known as *ecolinguistics*.

Ecolinguistics

The influential works of Trim (1959) and Haugen (1972) spurred on scholarly interests in ecolinguistics, as a branch of linguistics. Though this branch of linguistics came into existence in the late 20th century, a number of scholars have, since then, conducted researches on the relationship between language use and ecological consequences (see Halliday, 1990; Schleppegrell, 1997; Haugen, 2001; Kahn, 2001; Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001; Derni, 2008; Lakoff, 2010; Bland, 2014; Alexander & Stibbe 2014; Goatly, 2017; Stibbe, 2015, 2021). Its emergence was a response to the disruptive practices and environmentally-damaging activities of humans towards life-supporting ecosystems. Haugen (2001:57) therefore defines ecolinguistics "as the study of interactions between any given language and its environments." In other words, ecolinguistics deals with the relationship between language and ecology. Stibbe (2021) clearly points out the fundamental difference between linguistics and ecolinguistics: the main focus of linguistics is the scientific study and analysis of human-human

interactions, while ecolinguistics centres on human-to-nature interactions (p.161).

Since language actively shapes our perceptions of the world and the world is shaped along our linguistic affordances, it remains unarguable that language choices play a key role in shaping how humans construe and construct realities in relation to the ecosystems (Halliday, 1990). In view of this, Stibbe argues that the way humans conceptualise and relate with nature is a function of our mental models, which he terms "stories we live by" (Stibbe, 2015, 2021). Stibbe (2021:6) defines *stories we live by* as the "stories in the minds of multiple individuals." Thus, the "*stories*" are the outputs of our socio-cultural experiences and discourse affordances. Since it is our language, the 'stories' shape our mental models, behaviour and activities in relation to nature. Consequently, an ecolinguistic approach to such construal and construction of ecological realities would explicitly unravel ideological tensions embedded in discourse constructs, and the potential ecological consequences. Such disclosure is necessary in order to alleviate the disturbing effects of *Climate Change.*

Climate Change Discourse

Climate Change simply refers to an *unexpected change* or *unprecedented increase* in the Earth's surface atmosphere. The Frenchman, Jean Baptiste Fourier, was the first scientist to use the term "greenhouse", in 1827, to explain how the Earth is kept warmer through the rising level of *greenhouse* gases in the atmosphere (Makwanya, 2013). With this scenario, the Earth becomes increasingly warmer or too cold to sustain life as being experienced globally in recent times. In Africa, unsettling weather patterns, erratic rainfalls, flooding, erosion, increasing heat waves, gradual wildlife extinction, prolonged droughts, rapid desertification and crop failure are apparently disturbing effects of climate crisis (Toulmin, 2009). Such imbalance in atmospheric conditions is an existential threat to human wellbeing and wildlife survival. This threat has received global attention, with governments across the world, coming up with programmes, policies

and practices on how to mitigate the effects of and respond to global climate crises in their respective countries and contain global warming on a global front. In its 2nd unanimous declaration, the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in June, 1972 at Stockholm clearly states that: "the protection and improvement of the human environment is a major issue which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world; it is the urgent desire of the peoples of the whole world and the duty of all Governments" (United Nations, 1972, p.3).

The global concerns to avert ecological disaster become an important choice for policy makers, including Heads of Governments, to make informed decisions that would save the ecosystems. According to the 7th declaration of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in June, 1972 at Stockholm, "local and national governments will bear the greatest burden for large-scale environmental policy and action within their jurisdictions" (pp. 3-4). Thus, climate change discourse is a common manifestation during public discourse, namely in the media (i.e. print, electronic and online) and public spaces, especially at political fora. Since global climate crisis directly affects the lives of people on the planet, politicians and public office holders are enacting policies and taking adequate measures, as appropriate, to contain global climate crisis. In view of the hyped 'Change' mantra of his administration, the aim of this study is to undertake an ecolinguistic analysis of President Buhari's monologic speeches at international summits on climate change discourse, with a view to revealing the ecological stance and ideological posturing with which human subjects are framed and projected in relation to environmental issues.

President Muhammadu Buhari
President Muhammadu Buhari was the fourth democratically-elected President of Nigeria of the Fourth Republic sworn in on May 29th, 2015 (Ajibiye, 2018, p.143). He won the 2015 and 2019 presidential elections on the platform of the All Progressives Congress

(APC) party, making him the second Nigeria's President who has been successfully re-elected for a second term in office after the former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (i.e. 1999 - 2007). As a sitting President of Nigeria, he attended a number of international summits on Climate Change where he presented speeches detailing his administration's positions on and responses to ecological issues and climate change.

In the present study, such (selected) speeches have been subjected to an ecolinguistic analysis, using Arran Stibbe's *Stories We Live By* as a theoretical framework, with a focus on his conceptual postulation of Frames. The main objective is to examine and explicate how President Buhari discursively frames, projects human subjects in and promotes government's ecological stance through his Climate Change speeches.

Theoretical Framework: *Stories We Live By*

Arran Stibbe is the proponent of the theoretical framework: *Stories We Live By* (Stibbe, 2015, 2021). The title is a coinage adapted from Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) 'Metaphors We Live By.' He explicates how 'stories' in social spaces cognitively influence human construal of natural resources and ecological issues. He argues that these 'stories' manifest in text, but reside in the minds of all persons living in the same culture (Stibbe, 2015 p. 6). Since such *stories* exist in the minds of multiple persons, the 'stories we live by' inevitably become a cognitive model through which the people think, talk and act. Similarly, the *stories* considerably influence how the people treat nature and address environmental issues. Suffice it to mention here that the theory employs an interdisciplinary methodology to ecolinguistic enquiry, especially how it integrates the interrelated frameworks of critical discourse analysis, social psychology and appraisal theory in its analytic approach (Stibbe, 2017).

Though the theory relies on eight conceptual forms of 'stories' (Stibbe, 2015 p.17), one of the interesting conceptual postulations of *Stories We Live By* is 'framing'. Framing is simply defined as the overall

contents of knowledge about the world through which frames are deployed in environmental/ecological discourse (Stibbe, 2017, p. 509). A frame is the discursive structure(s) or particular linguistic facility through which realities, experiences, expectations and values are cognitively encoded, construed and projected (Lakoff, 2006; Blackmore and Holmes, 2013). Blackmore and Holmes (2013) posit that a primary means through which frames can be evaluated in environmental discourse is to check whether 'trigger words' are deployed to project *intrinsic* values (i.e., care for others and nature) or *extrinsic* values (i.e., concern for oneself) (Stibbe, 2017, p. 506). Examples of intrinsic frames are 'nature is life', 'beauty in nature', 'better environment, better tomorrow', 'nurture nature, nurture future' while extrinsic frames are 'timber is money', 'organic change' and 'mining brings wealth' among others.

Since frames significantly manifest in particular linguistic features, the focus of the present study is to identify, categorise and analyse potential trigger words that discursively call frames to mind in President Buhari's selected speeches on Climate Change, with the aim of unpacking how human subjects are framed and projected in human-to-nature relations.

Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative method in its analytic approach. Data gathering methods involved Internet search. The data for this study are President Buhari's monologic speeches at international summits on Climate Change delivered, as a sitting president, between May 29th, 2015 and May 29th, 2022. Among the several speeches delivered by the President at various international summits, these speeches were purposively chosen because they represent the Buhari-led administration's ideological stance on Climate Change discourse – a global crisis. For the purpose of this study, seven (7) speeches were purposively selected. From the best of our knowledge, he had attended and presented speeches at the underlisted

international summits, and such speeches make up our data. The table below provides a succinct description of the speeches.

Table 1: Description of Data

DATES	INTERNATIONAL SUMMITS	VENUES	CODES
Sept. 2015	70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly	New York, USA	70-UNGA
Sept. 2016	*71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly*	New York, USA	71-UNGA
Dec. 2017	*The International Climate Change Summit*	Paris, France	ICCS
Sept. 2018	*73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly*	New York, USA	73-UNGA
Sept. 2019	*Extraordinary Summit of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of Governments on Counter-Terrorism*	Ouagadougou, Burkina-Faso	ESA-ECOWAS
Sept. 2020	*75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*	New York, USA	75-UNGA
Nov. 2021	*United Nations Climate Change Conference*	Glasgow, United Kingdom	UNCCC

Data Presentation and Analysis

The analysis of data is predicated on the discursive strategy adopted by President Buhari in the construal of human subjects using discourse frames in his Climate Change speeches. The identified discursive frames in the monologic speeches are *ecocentrism, anthropogenesis, anthropomorphism, mendicant identity* and *eco-futurism.* Each of these frames is highlighted and explicated as follows:

The Discourse Frame of Ecocentrism

Ecocentrism emphasises the intrinsic worth of non-human species and the physical environments. Caring for and valuing nature and the physical environments is thus worthy of human considerations

as it significantly contributes to the continuation and survival of human and non-human species. Samples of ecocentrism in the excerpts are presented and analysed below:

Excerpt 1:

> *In Nigeria, we have seen extreme weather variations, rising sea levels, encroaching desertification, excessive rainfall, erosion and floods, land degradation - all of which* **threaten** *the ecosystem. These developments have* **devastating** *human costs and are affecting food security, livelihoods and the* **very survival** *of our people.* 70th-UNGA, 2015.

From the above excerpt, President Buhari frames nature and the physical environments as an indispensable life-supporting mechanism in order to explicitly project his ecocentric stance. Citing the disturbing evidence of ecological crises in Nigeria, he implicitly suggests that 'environmental problems inevitably set off human problems.' His promotion of ecocentrism is evident through the deployment of *trigger* words such as "threaten", "devastating" and "very survival of our people" to call to mind the consequences of climate crises that humans face. Suggesting that ecological issues **threaten** the source of human livelihood and survival frame that tells the 'story' of nature and the physical environments as something to be nurtured, rather than serially exploited.

Excerpt 2:

> *COP- 21 marked a* **watershed** *in the global community's commitment to address climate change and we* **will continue** *in our* **determined efforts** *to* **reduce** *Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.* 71st-UNGA, 2016.

COP-21 is the official code for the 21st Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in December, 2015. The Paris Accord was unanimously adopted at the Convention. In excerpt 2, Buhari reveals his ecocentric disposition through the tactful deployment of trigger words such as: "watershed", "will continue", "determined efforts" and "reduce" to implicitly frame the 'story' of consistency in, willingness and

reassurance to the adoption of the resolution at the meeting: 'reduce' the menacing enemy of nature (i.e. greenhouse gas emissions). By discursively affirming self-readiness and assurance to reducing anthropogenic emissions, he frames the 'story' that prioritises the safety of the ecosystems, rather than the business-as-usual paradigm of ecological consumerism.

Excerpt 3:

> The world took **a giant step** in Paris, towards addressing the challenges of Climate Change. Nigeria is **proud** to have been part of the process leading to the **adoption** of the Paris Agreement in December 2015 at the 21st meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. - 71st-UNGA, 2016

Having recognised the long-term consequences of increasing global warming faced by humans, the Paris Agreement is an international treaty adopted in December, 2015 by over 190 countries to rein in global warming by middle of the 21st century. It was the first time that all nations unanimously affirmed to the life-threatening effects of Climate Change, which culminated in the adoption of a common front: the Paris Accord. The common commitment is to curb rising emission levels of greenhouse gas and control pollutants that are harmful to nature and the environments. In excerpt 2, Buhari uses *trigger* words: "a giant step", "proud" and "adoption" to discursively frame the story of ecocentrism: his firm commitment to the Paris Accord, an Agreement which discourages the destruction of systems that life depends on for survival.

The Discourse Frame of Anthropogenesis

Anthropogenesis refers to the overriding influence that humans considerably have on the physical environments and natural resources. When human activities or practices endanger the continuing survival of the Earth, such influences are classified as *anthropogenic*. Anthropogenic expressions in the excerpts are highlighted and analysed below:

Excerpt 1:

> *The world is experiencing* **new** *and* **unusual** *climate variability due to* **increased** *emissions of Greenhouse Gases. Even though Africa contributes* **very little** *to global warming, the socio-economic consequences of climate change spare no nation.* 70th-UNGA, 2015.

When there is a global-scale rise in air pollution and greenhouse gases, especially Carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, in the atmosphere, these gases trap heat from the ground below, making the Earth a warmer place to live in. Sadly, the average Earth's atmospheres have been rising over the years due, partly, to the continuing burning of coals and fuels derived from crude oil. Undoubtedly, such human practices are harmful to the Earth's surface. In excerpt 1, Buhari uses words such as "new", "unusual" and "increased" to trigger an anthropogenic frame, suggesting that such human practices endanger Earth's life. He, however, half-excuses Africa by firmly asserting that "Africa contributes *very little* to global warming." Using the adverbial group of degree: "very little" is explicitly intended to trigger an Africa's insignificant-contribution frame in human practices relating to ecological destructions. The story is not the same with the highly-industrialised developed world.

Excerpt 2:

> *I share the sentiment expressed by the Secretary-General that the world is* <u>*on the* **verge** *of climate* **catastrophe**</u>. *Undeniably, Climate Change is* <u>*a* **human-induced** *phenomenon*</u>. ESA-ECOWAS, 2019.

In excerpt 2, Buhari deploys words such as "verge", "catastrophe" and "human-induced" to frame humans as causation of ecological destructions, a discursive structure of self-projection as an anthropogenic. The nominal phrases: "climate catastrophe" and "a human-induced phenomenon" create a story of a human-dominance frame in human-nature relations. Human domination of nature is exemplified through the continuing commodification of natural

resources and the physical environments. Buhari's anthropogenic stance implicitly reveals that when humans focus attention only on *extrinsic* interests (i.e. self-care), rather than *intrinsic* interests (i.e. nature-care), the environments and nature suffer. And when nature and the environments suffer, humans, consequently, are not safe.

The Discourse Frame of Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism is realised in discourse when a discourse producer(s) ascribes qualities associated with human agency to non-human species for the sake of projecting an ideological stance. Such human attributes personified by non-human species include the expression of intention, emotion and behavioural patterns. An anthropomorphic expression is used in the excerpts below:

Excerpt 1:

> *The negative consequences of Climate Change have manifested in the* **drying up** *of our Lake Chad.* <u>The</u> **means of livelihood** <u>of an</u> <u>estimated 30 million</u> **inhabitants** <u>of the Lake Chad Basin, spread</u> <u>across Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, are being</u> **severely** **threatened**. 71st-UNGA, 2016.

Lake Chad is a massive body of water surrounded by land situated in central Africa, at the border junction of four close-knit countries (i.e., Chad, Niger, Cameroun and Nigeria). The lake flourishes in rainy seasons, but shrinks little in dry seasons. Suffice it to mention here that the lake abundantly provides natron, Chad's major natural resource. Mining natron produces sodium carbonate (i.e., salt) used to make medicines, soap or paper. Numerous islands at the shore of the lake are densely inhabited. In excerpt 1, Buhari uses words such as "drying up" and "severely threatened" to trigger a destructive capacity frame that tells a story of how nature accelerated "the drying up of our Lake Chad." Since Lake Chad is a source of livelihood to its "estimated 30 million inhabitants", Buhari implicitly reveals his anthropomorphic stance by personifying nature and the physical environments as having the inherent capacity to not only 'severely threaten' humans and wildlife, but also cause an incalculable damage to human livelihood and

survival. Nature-care is thus a necessity, not an option in human-nature interactions.

Excerpt 2:

> *As you are aware, <u>the Lake Chad Basin, which **used to** be a region of productivity, food security and wealth for an estimated 40 million citizens</u> living around <u>the Chad Basin, has **shrunk significantly** from **its original size** due to Climate Change. </u>*   ESA-ECOWAS, 2019.

In excerpt 2, Buhari positively deploys words such as "productivity", "food security" and "wealth" to trigger an extolment frame that tells a story of how the Lake Chad Basin has accelerated human development in terms of *food security*, *wealth creation* and *poverty mitigation*. Using the preface, "as you are aware", is intended to instantiate 'general knowledge' of the extolment. Given his anthropomorphic disposition, Buhari however uses the phrases, "shrunk significantly" and "its original size", to trigger a deprecation frame that tells a story of how humans' destructive behaviour to nature and the environments can undermine human development and survival. Thus, humans' continuing destructive behaviour towards nature and the environments only puts humans at the heart of imminent natural disaster.

The Discourse Frame of Mendicant Identity

Mendicant identity, in this context, refers to the discursive portrayal of Self as someone who legitimises the receipt of charity as a moral obligation in dealing with human-nature relations. In other words, a mendicant identity manifests when a discourse producer's attitude is geared towards waiting on others' charitable deeds in order to fulfil a moral obligation. Excerpts that demonstrate Buhari's mendicant stance are highlighted and analysed below:

Excerpt 1:

> *<u>Simply, we **cannot** implement our Nationally Determined Contributions **without adequate** financial, technical and capacity building support from the developed countries...</u> In Nigeria, Government is actively promoting technologies and practices such as*

> sustainable land management, climate resilient agriculture… for reducing greenhouse gas emissions among others. <u>Sustaining these efforts will also **require external support**.</u> ICCS, 2017.

Since Climate crises are a common concern of humans, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) is a global response to climate change undertaken by members of the Conference of the Parties. Members of the Conference of the Parties include developed countries and developing countries. Since Nigeria is a developing country, President Buhari, in his speech, uses words such as "cannot", "without adequate" and "require external support" to trigger a mendicant identity frame that tells a story of helplessness of developing countries in matters relating to human-nature relationships. His deployment of the negative modal: "cannot" suggests impossibility, which contrasts with *may not* – probability. Besides, *cannot* signals a higher degree of uncertainty in terms of implementing the NDC, which triggers an indigent frame, making "external supports from developed countries" a compelling requirement.

Excerpt 2:

> <u>Nigeria remains **steadfast** in our **commitment** to the **revitalization** of Lake Chad</u>. *We are convinced that recharging the Lake will improve the living conditions of our people in the area … and assist in addressing environmental and security challenges threatening the region and its resources.* <u>Let me, therefore, reiterate the call for **international support** for the sub-regional efforts to raise the **$50 billion USD** required to **actualize** this initiative</u>. - 75th-UNGA, 2020.

In excerpt 2, Buhari deploys words such as "steadfast", "commitment" and "revitalisation" to trigger a national responsibility frame that tells a story of Nigeria's *commitment* and *steadfastness* in her climate change mitigation policies targeted at "the revitalisation of Lake Chad." In so doing, the revitalised lake would "improve the living conditions of" inhabitants in the area – a discursive strategy of self-portrayal as selfless. Such intrinsic frame (i.e. concern for others), however, is followed by "the call for international support" particularly, a financial support

worth of "$50 billion USD." Buhari's claim that a requisite financial support is "required to actualise this [climate change mitigation] initiative" thus projects his mendicant identity. Suffice it to mention here that framings of climate change as a global problem and a financial assistance opportunity underscore Buhari's underlying ideological stance (i.e., concern for Others requires financial incentives from Others).

Excerpt 3:

> *I will like to state **again** that attaining national and global climate change goals **would require** adequate and sustainable technical, **financial supports** to developing countries. The outcome of this Conference must result in **a quick resolution** of all outstanding issues pertaining to the finalisation of **the Paris Agreement** homegrown adaptation and mitigation, finance, technology transfer in 'Article 6'.* - UNCCC, 2021.

In excerpt 3, Buhari uses the word "again" to trigger a self-repetition frame that re-affirms a story of his mendicant disposition towards climate change actions. The salience of his mendicant stance is explicitly legitimised in the expression: "would require adequate and sustainable technical, financial supports to developing countries." Words such as "require", "adequate", "sustainable" and "technical, financial supports" trigger a requisite incentive frame that tells a story of the necessity of incentivising climate change actions and environmental integrity "to developing countries." Besides, Buhari, the sitting president of a developing country, deploys a quotation (i.e. manifest intertextuality) of the "Article 6" of the Paris Agreement. The President intentionally quotes the 'Article 6' to remind the United Nations, especially developed countries, that a promise made is a promise kept. In other words, all the promises made by developed countries to provide 'scaled-up' financial resources to developing countries, with respect to mitigation and adaptation in continuations of existing obligations in the Paris Agreement should not be rescinded.

The Discourse Frame of Eco-futurism (ECF)

Eco-futurism, in this context, refers to the discourse frames that uphold the necessity of looking to the future rather than reflecting on the past, especially when dealing with ecological issues. The goal is not limited to living well in the present, but to also prevent future generations from facing grim situations when responding to those ecological issues.

Excerpt 1:

> *We have **no other choice** but to **protect** our environment for the benefit of the **present** and **future** generations. Collectively, we are to work towards achieving this all-important objective.* - 70th-UNGA, 2015.

In excerpt 1, the President uses words such as "no other choice", "protect", "present and future generations" to trigger an eco-futurism frame that gives special salience to the story of future conditions of nature and the physical environments, especially for the sake of "present and future generations." Buhari's eco-futurism frame is explicitly instantiated in the expression: "We have no other choice" to tell a story of how environmental damage can bring about a grim future. Worthy of note is the President's choice of the plural first-person pronominals: "we" and "our" to project a sense of self-inclusion (i.e. Us, not *Them*). The self-inclusive pronouns trigger save-our-environments frame that underscores the necessity of collective actions towards environmental protections. Thus, if *we* desire a great future, *we* must get the story right now. Conversely, getting the story wrong now would endanger the lives of future generations.

Excerpt 2:

> *We must work together to liberate humanity from poverty, **save our planet** from the **devastation** of Climate Change and rid the world of terrorism for a more **peaceful** and **prosperous** future.* - 71st-UNGA, 2016

The word "devastation" contextually signals *severe damage* and *great upset*. Since Climate Change can cause severe damage and great upset

to humans and other non-human species, the President deliberately uses the expressions: "We must work together" and "to save our planet" to trigger an urgency frame that intrinsically represents humans as the supposed saviours of the Earth. Adopting sustainable environmental practices is not only necessary to saving the Earth but also requires a joint and quick action: "We must work together" not individually. The use of the first-person pronoun "we" also obligates the speaker, a sitting president of his country. Thus, saving the planet is an obligation all of us – the speaker and addresses - must fulfil in the interest of *our* future. Buhari's eco-futurism stance is explicitly represented in the way he clearly defines the expected future: "a more <u>peaceful</u> and <u>prosperous</u> future." By emphasising the future, the President discursively represents himself as a guardian of posterity and a visionary leader, whose political persuasion is coloured with immediate satisfaction of profit-making and ecological consumerism.

Discussion of Findings

Having analysed President Buhari's speeches on climate change, he discursively deployed frames of ecocentrism, anthropogenesis, anthropomorphism and eco-futurism – discourse structures that project Self-alignment with eco-friendly ideological persuasions. His ecocentrism suggests that whatever humans do to nature, they do to themselves. Buhari's anthropogenic stance puts humans' needs at the heart of developments in human-nature interactions, but not at the expense of environmental integrity. Additionally, the way he discursively personifies nature and the physical environments as possessing innate capacity to undermine human wellbeing and survival if neglected demonstrates his anthropomorphic disposition. Discursive evidence of eco-futurism shows that the President is a green-future campaigner. Sampled discursive configurations also reveal that Buhari explicitly projects leaders of developing countries, including Self, with the frame of mendicant identity, especially in matters connected with human-nature relations. The study argues that Buhari's discursive constructions instantiate the intrinsic worth of nature and the physical

environments as life-supporting and life-sustaining mechanisms, and are worthy of immense human considerations.

Conclusion

The study investigates frames in President Buhari's Climate Change speeches delivered at international fora spanning the period of his eight-year administration. The speeches were analysed using Stibbe's theoretical postulation of 'Stories We Live By' in order to unpack how he, a sitting President of the most populous African nation, frames (i.e., makes sense of) contemporary environmental issues and presents 'sub-Saharan Africa's ecological stories' to world's leaders. Sadly, Africa contributes 'very little' to global warming, but inevitably suffers tremendously from the devastating effects of Climate Change due to rising economic inequality, gender bias, political instability, customs and traditions. With Buhari's speeches on Climate Change in international summits, it is worthy of note that Nigeria, among other developing countries, genuinely cares for nature and takes a firm stance against practices and actions that promote environmentally destructive behaviour.

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