

LANGUAGE AND THE COMBAT OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA: A TEXT LINGUISTICS ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT BUHAHI'S SPEECH AT ANTI-CORRUPTION SUMMIT IN LONDON

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of language in the communication and interpretation of intentions in situations by examining language content of the selected speech. In this article, library research was used as a means of collecting required data and information because it is a qualitative research. Therefore, President Buhahi's Speech at Anti-Corruption Summit was selected and analysed through the use of Informativity and Situationality as aspects of Standards of Textuality postulated by Beaugrande and Dressler (1992). Corruption as a global phenomenon intelligible only in its social context, is an antisocial behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms (Aluko, 2009). This implies illegitimate use of power/position to benefit a private interest. The analysis was done by investigating how the text serves the communicative aim within the said framework. It was discovered that the experience and the linguistic performance of the writer are in conformity with the expected standards of a text. The key finding is that the text transferred new information and is relevant to the social situation of fighting corruption. The conclusion is that what linguists and scholars postulate in theories is practically obtainable when writers, as language users, use the theories.

Keywords: Combating Corruption, Text Linguistics, Informativity, Situationality

Introduction

Language is essential to governance where most activities performed are done through language. Linguistics is the study of the human ability to produce and interpret language in speaking and writing (Keith (Ed) 2016). It follows that linguistics studies language as an expression of and vehicle for social interaction. Consequently, linguistics as a scientific study of human language comprises Text Linguistics, a sub-discipline dealing with text study and analysis. Because English is used as a second language by Nigerians, speech writers in this context, need to have certain mastery of the language to be able to communicate effectively with it. This is because all Nigerians have their first language before the English Language. Therefore, Nigerian speech writers need to have a mastery of English that could express any non-native experience they intend to communicate.

Beside, speeches are expressed to meet the expectation of different audiences (Superceanu, 2011). Thus, every speech ought to address a certain audience who listen to it for a specific purpose such as to get information. It is clear that in any communicative process there are participants, those who produce / send a message and those who receive the message. This implies that when a text is produced, it cannot achieve the aim of communication if it does not meet certain standards. These crucial standards for a satisfying text are the seven standard of textuality without which a text will not mean anything to receivers (Beaugrande and Dressler 1981). That is, there will be no communication by a text that does not meet the seven standards of textuality. These standards of textuality which are within the domain of Text Linguistics are: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality. Each of these standards means much to the text and lack of any of them constitutes a barrier to efficient and effective communication. Therefore, it is potent to study how sentences may be used in connected stretches of language. In doing so, the way in which a text is situated in interaction and the communicative context are taken

into account. This is because what makes a speech is its contribution to communication between producer(s) and receiver(s).

Thus, Speech involves conveying a particular message to a particular audience at a given time in such a way that the said audience gets the message clearly (Sunday 2012). Speech is meant to be spoken but it also comes in written form. Written speech provides an opportunity to research into and understand the principles, values and practices of people (Sunny & Ofulue, 2008). The immense importance of speech as a means of communication and interaction is visible when people are restricted in an environment in which they are not allowed to communicate with others. Speech has remained an essential component of human life and interaction (Sunny & Ofulue, 2008). At the political level, power and authority are exercised through speech. However, corruption is one of the contemporary practices of people in Nigeria nowadays which governments struggle to fight against.

Corruption is a societal menace committed at individual level, organization level or government level. Corruption as a global phenomenon comprehensible only in its social context, is an anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms (Aluko, 2009). This implies illegal use of power to benefit personal interests. Corruption is the canonization of fraudulence; the brazen celebration of impunity, which pollutes the ethical hygiene of a society (Ogbunwezeh, 2005). It is also seen as a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of consideration of personal gain which need not be monetary only. In this regard, it includes illegal, immoral and dishonest ways of living. In addition, Transparency International (2018) defines corruption as abuse of entrusted power for private gain. This menace is mostly tackled through use of language in speaking or writing. Corruption as a societal menace is mostly tackled and dealt with by individuals, organizations or governments through the use of language.

In this study, a library-based research is conducted where all the materials used were gotten from the library and the internet. The

research is designed as a textual study in which instruments such as questionnaire, interview and recording were not used. It is a text-based linguistic research where the data were gathered directly from the selected speech. Complete text of the selected speeches were obtained from the internet for the research purpose. Selected parts of the speeches were analysed. The technique adopted for the sampling was purposive also known as judgmental sampling (Akuezuilo & Agus 2002).

Written speeches offer research possibilities in Linguistics discipline but attention has been given mostly to political speeches. Language is equally essential to governance for the performance of most activities (Moses & Susan 2012). This is why the study of speeches has become an important aspect of language study. For instance, Awonuga (2005) did a stylistic study of Obasanjo's speech 'sustenance of democracy'. Also, Moses & Susan (2012) carried out Pragmatic Analysis of Victory and Inaugural Speeches of Umaru Yar'Adua. In addition, Alaba (2013) undertook Speech Act Analysis of Acceptance of Nomination Speeches of Chiefs Obafemi Awolowo and M.K.O. Abiola. This shows that scholars have written on various presidents' speeches, but the writers focused on political speeches where leaders' speeches on contemporary issues in general and corruption in particular were neglected; leaving a gap worthy of study. Consequently, this study is a contribution to the study of language of governance speeches. This is why this study undertakes the study of President Buhahi's speech on the fight against corruption in 2016 using Informativity and Situationality, as aspects of seven standards of Textuality Theory.

The aim of this study is to apply Informativity and Situationality as components of standards of textuality in the analysis of President Buhahi's speech at anti-corruption summit in London so as to identify and explain the information content of the speech and the situation in which the speech was delivered. The objectives of the study are to: investigate the way in which the writer/presenter of the selected speech used English to perform the functional role of

communication; examine the information content of the speech and the extent to which the usage succeed; and examine how the speech is relevant to the social context in which it was delivered.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is Text Linguistics in orientation and it depends on the principles of Beaugrande and Dressler's Standards of Textuality. Within this theory, text are approached and explained based on seven Standards of Textuality. Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) define text as a communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality- Cohesion, Coherence, Intentionality, Acceptability, Informativity, Situationality and Intertextuality. Standards of Textuality as popular analytic tools provide a means of discovering how and for what reason texts must be produced and received and what standard they must have to fulfil the communicative aims (Tas, 2011). With the use of Standard of Textuality, text(s) producer(s) realize what to put in place to encode well or to pass across what they intend to pass. And the receivers as well will realize what to explore in order to decode well from the producer(s). The Standards of Textuality otherwise known as principles of a satisfying text are briefly highlighted as follow.

Cohesion

Cohesion refers to grammatical unity of a text in which different components exist. It encompasses all of the functions that can be used to signal relations among surface elements. According to Halliday and Hassan (1976:4), cohesion exists "where interpretation of any item in the discourse requires making reference to some other items in the discourse". Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) maintain that in discourse surface components depend upon each other based on grammatical forms and conventions such that cohesion rest on grammatical dependencies. This means that the syntactic knowledge of a language user plays an important role in constructing this relation.

Coherence

Coherence is the continuity of senses in a text which is concerned with the ways in which concepts and relations are linked and used (Beaugrende and Dressler, 1981). Coherence emphasizes the unity of meaning through the harmony of concepts and relations. With coherence, a text sticks together as a unit (Hatch, 1992). It deals with the underline text unlike cohesion which deals with the surface text. Surface texts may not always express relations explicitly. Therefore, writers supply as many relations as are needed to make sense clear in any particular text. In this regard, a coherent text has an underlying logical structure that acts to guide the reader/listener through the text. McCarthy (1991) maintains that a text makes sense because it hangs together and it is not a jumble of sentences.

Intentionality

Intentionality refers to the specific goal or intention of the text producer. Beaugrende and Dressler (1981) maintain that intentionality incorporates the intentions of text producers in which they organize the language to be a text in order to be utilized in communicative interaction. This implies that in any text there is a producer who has intention to produce a sound piece of information to a receiver; therefore, he/she brings words together to achieve a specific goal. This goal may be expression of oneself, informing others, entertaining or criticizing etc. Whatever the aim is, the text must be produced in a cohesive and coherent way so that it serve the intention of the text producer.

Acceptability

Acceptability refers to receiver's need and willingness to accept the text proffered as a communicative text. It is concerned with the text receiver's attitude that the set of occurrences should have some use or relevance to be utilized in communicative interaction (Beaugrende and Dressler, 1981). That is, Acceptability is very much sensitive to the social activity the text is fulfilling. Readers or listeners

of a text receive it for various purposes because reading a text entails expecting something from it. In this sense, the type of text, reader's intention and the producer's intention must build a whole body. To some extent, this depends on text type, cultural setting and the desirability of goals.

Informativity

Informativity is the text ability to transfer new information. It has to do with the way in which parts of the text have communicative value (Donnelly, 1994). That is, a text should contain some new information. Informativity is seen as a gradable phenomenon for its degree varies from participant to participant in the communicative event. It is concerned with how known or unknown are the occurrences in the text. Expected information from a text include how different the object or event is from others, how it is operated or conducted, and its benefits.

Situationality

Situationality is related to real time or place of the text. A text is relevant to a particular social or pragmatic context. (Donnelly, 1994) argues that every text unfolds in some context of use. This is related to the situation the reader is in. The quality and effect of communication are determined by contextual knowledge shared by participants (Trask, 1995). In this sense, communicative partners as well as their attitudinal state are important for the text's meaning, purpose and intended effect. Economy of words is the most important thing here.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality refers to the relationship between a given text and other relevant texts encountered (Neubert and Shreve, 1992). This implies that the formation and understanding of one text will be influenced by the structure of another text similar to it. In the reading process, a reader's stored knowledge, experience and previous reading

affect the present reading perception. (Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). Consequently, the production and perception of a given text depends on the participant's knowledge of other texts. Intertextuality helps to develop meaningful relations between various components of communication.

Presentation and Analysis

For presentation and analysis purposes, the speech is divided into two major parts. In the process, the entire speech is analysed.

Part one of the Speech: Preamble and National Experience

In this part, the speech writer/presenter acknowledged the personalities present. He gave the perceptual definition of corruption and also shared the national experience of corruption to the gathering.

Informativity

Informativity is concerned with the extent to which a substance communicated by a text is expected or unexpected.

Expected information (information that is known/not new to the audience):

I am delighted to be invited to this event...

I thank you Your Excellency... for asking me to speak at this gathering.

Corruption is a ... that undermines the fabric of all societies.

...it was with a view to tackling the growing threat that corruption...

Unexpected information (information that is unknown/new to audience):

It constitutes a serious threat to good governance...

These considerations informed my decision to...

...the problem would still continue unabated, but even become more intractable...

I intend to do this by placing the fight ... within the context of the three priority programmes...

Situationality

Situationality deals with names and titles of recency indicating real time of the text and economy of expressions.

Names and titles of recency

*The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, the Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland
...organized by Prime Minister Rt. Hon. David Cameron that...*

*...the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) that entered
into force in 2005...*

On assumption of office on 29th May 2015

Economy of expressions

... that undermines the fabric of all societies

It does not differentiate between developed and developing countries.

Little did we know that eleven years since then...

... are combating insecurity, tackling corruption and job creation..

In the above extract, expected information which are referring to information that is known to the audience or which is not new to them as introductory part, arouse the attention of the listeners/reader(s) and identified corruption as an agent undermining all societies. It also included the experience of the speaker and what his nation experienced as unexpected information is denoting information that is unknown to the audience or which is new to them in this introductory part. These add to Sunny & Ofulue (2008) that speech introduction comprises protocol and courtesies; and it also adds to Ricky (2017) that a good speech introduction serves as attention getter and a point at which main ideas are identified. This introductory part defines the concept of corruption and adds to Sunday (2012) who argues that speech introduction defines some concepts.

Names and titles of recency in the extract show the situation of the text and its relation to real time and place. Thus, the names and titles depict contextual knowledge shared by communicative partners

as the participants in the communicative event. In line with economy of expressions, 'all societies', 'developed and developing countries' and 'eleven years' economize mentioning of various societies, countries, and years respectively. Thus, instead of taking much time, energy and space mentioning the individuals, things, aspects or concepts, the writer/presenter used collective and common lexicons in passing across the intended meaning in as brief as possible way. That is speaker/writer communicated precisely because it was a formal event where great personalities gathered for official issues of national and international concern.

Part Two of the Speech: Government Efforts and Need for International Support

This part contains measures and action taken and those at hand in combating corruption. Also, the writer/presenter pinpoints the necessity for international support and collaboration in the fight against corruption.

Informativity

Expected information (information that is known/not new to the audience):

...this vice is largely responsible for the social and economic problems our country faces today.

...commitment to tackling corruption is also evident in the freedom and support granted to...

Through the...TSA and BVN, we have been able to remove 23,000 ghost workers...

It is for this reason that we are seeking the support of many countries...

...provisions in the appropriate UN Convention that require countries to return assets...

Unexpected information (information that is unknown/new to audience):

...our commitment to this effort by bringing integrity to governance...

I admit that there are a few cases where apparently stringent rules have been applied...

*...our experience has been that repatriation of corrupt proceeds is very tedious...
...that domestic perpetrators of corrupt practices do often work hand-in-hand
with international criminal cartels.*

*I therefore, call for the establishment of an international anti-corruption
infrastructure...*

Situationality

Names and titles of recency

EFCC, ICPC, CCB, and CCT

...here in London, in 2013...

...governments providing support for whistle-blowers.

alongside Prime Minister Cameron during the Summit tomorrow.

Economy of expressions

...our frontline anti-corruption agencies...

...the Report released by Chatham House...

*The important findings of the Chatham House document are illuminating
and troubling..*

...internal and external perpetrators.

...the economy and stability of oil-producing countries...

The critical stakeholders here present...

In the above extract, with regard to expected information and unexpected information a few point are concentrated on with supportive information that justify the main points. Here, expected information is referring to information that is known to the audience or which is not new to them and the unexpected information is denoting information that is unknown to the audience or which is new to them. This affirms Ricky (2017) that for a speech to be memorable enough, it needs to focus on a few points and provide effective supporting facts for each. Also, it confirms the opinion of Sunny & Ofulue (2008) that with the right information, a speech can touch and move the audience/ reader the direction required.

In the extract, the situation of the text and its relation to real time and place are expressed through names and titles of recency such as 'here in London, in 2013' and 'whistle-blowers'. As to the economy of expressions, 'anti-corruption agencies', 'the report released', 'important findings' and internal and external perpetrators' economize stating of several agencies, the whole report, the various findings and the different perpetrators respectively. Thus, the names and titles depict contextual knowledge shared by communicative partners as the participants in the communicative event. So, the writer communicated the necessary without stating the institutions, individuals, items or aspects involved. Instead, collective and common naming terms were used.

Conclusion

In conclusion, mostly, what is postulated in theories by linguists and scholars is practically obtainable when language users use the language. In this article, the English text, speech of President Buhari at anti-corruption summit has been analysed in terms of Informativity and Situationality. From the analysis, the text meet the information purpose intended by the producer and it is received as that by the audience. It is also revealed from the analysis that the speech transfers some new information and it is relevant to the social context it is meant for. Therefore, the text is found informing the audience/reader(s) in a particular situation. That is, it contains known and unknown information as well as names and titles of recency. The speech, as informative type, explains to the audience/reader(s) in understandable way. This is in line with the argument of Sunny & Ofulue (2008) who argue that the purpose of informative speech is to inform by explaining. Thus, the text is capable of serving the communicative aim it is set to serve and it is to be regarded as a standard text.

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