

Self-Profiling and Agenda Marketing in Buhari's May 29, 2018 Broadcast and Adjoining Pronouncements

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Abstract

Considering that the discursive structures in political discourse often manifest the ideological properties of language and the choices that speakers make from a number of alternative words are self-serving, this paper evaluates the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari's linguistic strategies of self-profiling and political agenda marketing. Data were excerpted from Buhari's May 29, 2018 Democracy Day broadcast, "The-Not-Too-Young-to-Run-Bill" and his Press Statement announcing a posthumous Award to the winner of June 12, 1993 Presidential Election and the declaration of June 12 as Democracy Day in Nigeria. The study, based on Critical Discourse Analysis, revealed that self-profiling and agenda marketing in these texts manifested language ideologies which were instantiated through the co-option of critical stakeholders, performance profiling and agenda-setting which were aimed at halting the low performance rating of the president but to earn him re-election in 2019. Buhari's pronouncements and, by extension, his ideology, were political gimmicks aimed at enlisting the support of Nigerians and hoodwink them into giving him a fresh mandate. The study's interrogation of Buhari's pre-election pronouncements could guide the public in their reaction to the ideologies of politicians.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, agenda, ideologies, politics, power

1. Introduction

The democratic system of government allows periodic elections. In Nigeria, the President and State Governors are eligible for a maximum of two-terms in office. Success in subsequent elections is dependent on the scorecard of the office holder as such is often perceived as some sort of referendum on the performance of the incumbent. Buhari's 2015 electoral victory and assumption of office as president of Nigeria was anchored on a three-pronged agenda, namely; anti-corruption, security and economic prosperity. Preponderance of opinion in the media and among Nigerians at large, however, indicates that the Buhari administration has underperformed not only on its set agenda but on other aspects of governance.

Obasanjo, a former President and Buhari's predecessor, in a letter, gave a summary of what most Nigerians perceive as Buhari's failure. The letter captures contemporary issues of corruption, nepotism and degeneration of security architecture among other evils bedeviling Nigeria:

"The lice of poor performance in government – poverty, insecurity, poor economic management, nepotism, gross dereliction of duty, condonation of misdeed – if not outright encouragement of it, lack of progress and hope for the future, lack of national cohesion and poor management of internal political dynamics and widening inequality – are very much with us today" (www.punchng.com).

As earlier stated, Obasanjo was believed to have aggregated the verdicts of the vast majority of Nigerians on Buhari. Other influential Nigerians including senior retired military Generals, who incidentally were Buhari's colleagues, have also criticised the incumbent Nigerian president over his government policies. They are believed to have withdrawn their pre-2015 electoral support that largely aided Buhari's success and have re-grouped in a bid to stop the president's re-election bid. Buhari, the target of these political tirades, is worried and would not let go of power neither would he surrender his right of seeking a fresh mandate without a fight.

From Shehu Shagari in 1979, Obasanjo after leaving office that year and in collaboration with his military constituency, has facilitated the emergence of every Nigerian president. Ironically, Shagari perhaps being the

exception, Obasanjo has equally played a leading role in booting every elected president out of power. It was his public letter for instance, that informed the political alliance that stopped Jonathan's re-election bid. From the foregoing, Buhari's May 29, 2018 Democracy Day broadcast and the adjoining pronouncements may be seen as strategies for self-preservation. The pronouncements which underscore the achievements of his administration manifested certain ideological contents for the marketing of his second-term agenda.

Other than his broadcast, Enyi (2015), Sharndama (2015) and Ademilokun (2015) have studied Buhari's inaugural speeches from different analytical orientations. Nnamdi-Eruchalu's (2017) critical study focussed albeit narrowly on the unpacking of Buhari's deployment of pronouns on the same subject. The dearth of scholarship in the critique of Buhari's broadcasts notwithstanding their preponderance of veiled political agenda has motivated the evaluation, in this study, of the president's linguistic strategies of self-profiling and political agenda marketing. In addition, Buhari's self-profiling is for political self-preservation and desperate endeavour to halt his "popularity [which] has nosedived since 2015 till now" (Showumi, 2018). The evaluation of the strategies which underscore the chest-beating culture of most political office holders in Nigeria is aimed at guiding the gullible electorates in reading political speeches between the lines.

2. Statement of Problem

Certain interrogations are pertinent to this study. What are the linguistic items that characterised the president's self-profiling? What are the ideological stance and concealed political agenda in Buhari's broadcast and allied pronouncements? How is the contestation for political dominance reflective in Buhari's language use?

3. Method and Data

This paper, with preference for a qualitative analytical method and purposive selection of language use, excerpted its data from three texts, namely: Buhari's May 29, 2018 Democracy Day broadcast (DDB). Second, "The Not Too Young to Run Bill" (NTYR) signed on June 1, 2018. Third is the Press Statement announcing the posthumous Award of the Grand Commander of the Federal Republic, GCFR to the acclaimed winner of June 12, 1993 Presidential Election, Chief M.K.O. Abiola and the ideological declaration of June 12 as Nigerian Democracy Day on 6 June, 2018.

4. Theoretical Background

This study adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA, lacking in homogeneity in its theory and methodology, presents its research with multifarious orientations as occasioned by different data and contexts, political discourse inclusive. This is traceable to the lack of consensus in the definitions of the terms 'discourse', 'critical', 'ideology', 'power' and other items that characterise the discipline of CDA. The multifarious nature of CDA has informed Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) preference for the notion of a 'school' for CDA research.

Criticism as part of CDA can be traced to the influence of the Frankfurt School. 'Critical Theory' indicates that "social theory should be oriented towards critiquing and changing [the] society, in contrast to traditional theory [that is] oriented solely to understanding or explaining it" (Wodak, 2011). The underlying concept of critical theory is criticism which is used as a diagnostic tool in the evaluation of the socio-cultural nuances of the society. The term 'critical' is traceable to Critical Linguistics approach (Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew, 1979; Kress and Hodge, 1979). Among other ideas, they held that the use of language could lead to a mystification of social events which could be elucidated through systematic analysis.

Criticism is conventionally used to link 'social and political engagement' with 'a sociologically informed construction of society' (Wodak, 2009). Hence, 'critique' is making visible the "interconnectedness of things" (Fairclough, 1995:747). CDA, language use and its critique, particularly in the political arena, may lead to the emancipation of the society and the citizenry from manipulation and domination, thereby informing Wodak's (2011) averment that they are aimed at producing 'enlightenment and emancipation'.

Political discourse gained currency post World War II. Klemperer (1947) studied socialist language and elucidated how language is used for propaganda and control. Wodak (2011) in turn focused on the everyday lives of Members of the European Parliament and other politicians because the frequently observed *depoliticization* of voters is linked to "democracy deficit and the huge dissatisfaction about the strong ritualisation of politics and the tiny snapshots provided by media which condense complex political processes into iconic images".

The concept of power is central to CDA with its focus on the analysis of the language use of politicians and to whom the existence of inequalities can be attributed. Wodak and Meyer (2009:2) aver that CDA is "interested in the way discourse (re)produces social domination, that is, the power abuse of one group over others, and how dominated

groups may discursively resist such abuse”. As enthused by Nnamdi-Eruchalu (2017), the ability to deploy the ideological properties of language to sway the people and manipulate their mind is a sure way to achieving success in the political domain. Widdowson’s (2007:67) had earlier submitted that “... all communication, to a greater or lesser extent, is an exercise in control, an attempt to assert one’s own position and to persuade the other to accept it. When somebody says, or writes something, it is with the intention of getting the addressee, the second ... party to think or feel or act in a certain way....”.

The pronouncements of Buhari and, by extension, his ideology, were evaluated as political gimmicks which were aimed at enlisting the support of Nigerians or hoodwink them into giving him a fresh mandate in 2019. This is not only a reinforcement of Fairclough and Wodak’s (1997) argument, it conceptualises the notion of ideology, which often finds expression in language use and power. Dominant ideologies, as are reflective in Buhari’s pre-2019 election pronouncements which may seem “neutral” on its face value with assumptions that may stay largely unchallenged are consequently laid bare in this study.

Political discourse is complex, multifaceted and comprises broadcast, parliamentary debates, speeches, propaganda, political talk shows, interviews, and so on. It aims at persuading or manipulating the audience to accept what the leaders sell to them. It is often seen as “typically verbose, hyperbolic, dishonest and immoral’ and is sometimes simply labelled ‘rhetoric” (van Dijk 1997: 4). George Orwell exploited the use and abuse of the English language by political elites in his Nineteen Eighty Four and suggested that “Language has the power in politics to mask the truth and mislead the public” (Berkes 2000:1). In other words, politicians choose words that help them gain control over the people by selling to them ideologically loaded words which may end up in lies, deception or absolute nothingness.

Along van Dijk’s (1995:18) averment that CDA “focuses on the strategies of manipulation, legitimization, the manufacture of consent and other discursive ways to influence the minds (and indirectly the actions) of people in the interest of the powerful”, this paper is a critique Buhari’s broadcast and linguistic strategies aimed at gaining political upper-hand. The texts and talks we produce in various speech events are constructed to serve the interests of the dominant members of society. In other words, “our words are not neutral. Our words are politicised because they carry the power that reflects the interest of those who speak” (McGregor 2003: 2).

The choices we make of words from a number of alternative words available are self-serving, but many language users subscribe to them unknowingly. Consequently, political elites choose discourse structures that place them at the centre of power. CDA questions the naturalized assumptions that sustain power relationship with the aim of raising consciousness and creating awareness that will engender social equality and social justice particularly in the Nigerian context. Fairclough in his Marxist’s conceptualisation of ideologies presents them as constructions of practices from particular perspectives:

Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation. They may be enacted in ways of interaction (and therefore in genres) and inculcated in ways of being identities (and therefore styles). Analysis of texts ... is an important aspect of ideological analysis and critique ... (Fairclough, 2003: 218).

Discourse (re)produces social domination particularly the abuse of power by one group over the other. It is only natural that there will be some form of discursive resistance by the dominated group. It is arguable, therefore, that Buhari’s language choices are a form of abuse and are aimed at manipulating the populace for electoral gains against the low approval rating and scorecard of the government.

Within the context of the struggle for power, Buhari’s language and ideology, in their transparent and opaque structures, could be interrogated. The linguistics of these strategies were exemplified in his May 29, 2018 Democracy Day broadcast and the adjoining pronouncements which culminated in the signing into law the “Not-Too-Young-To-Run” Bill and the Press Release on the adoption of June 12 as Nigeria’s new Democracy Day. The nexus between June 12 and the 2019 presidential election have been highlighted. John Alechenu quoted Abubakar Atiku, a presidential aspirant in Nigeria, as calling on all political actors “to let June 12 and all that it embodies inspire us [Nigerians] to promote democratic principles, especially as Nigeria is about to go to the polls again.”

5. Discussion and Presentation of Data

Self-profiling and agenda marketing in Buhari’s May 29, 2018 broadcast and its adjoining pronouncements manifested language ideologies which were instantiated through the co-option of critical stakeholders, performance profiling and agenda-setting which aimed at halting the low performance rating of the president and secure for him a fresh electoral mandate.

5.1 Buhari's Co-option of Critical Stakeholders.

Co-option in the purview of this paper is the ideological enlistment of critical segments of the electorates into Buhari's political agenda. The president does this by aligning with the interests of the electorates and in projecting the electorates as part of his administration. This is demonstrated in his acknowledgement of the role of women in nation-building. Aware that women have numerical advantage and more than a passive interest in electoral activities and in consideration of their agitation for a fair share in the nation's political leadership, Buhari in his 2018 DDB co-opted them into his agenda as is evident in the excerpts below:

Excerpts 1: It is pertinent to also make mention of the innumerable contribution of the Nigerian woman to national development and advancement of democracy, over the last three years. The government and people appreciate you all as mothers of our great country (DDB Para 33).

In acknowledging the nationalistic role of women, the speaker stopped at only the three preceding years of his administration while in practical terms, women's efforts in nation-building is as old as the country, Nigeria. This strategy in itself has unveiled the real motive behind the president's applause as being politically self-serving and a damage control initiative. This is considering that the speaker had in the past denigrated his wife, and by extension, the women as belonging to the "other room".

If women are re-known for their electoral value, members of the armed forces undoubtedly provides the president with security balance. Hardly can any ruler, benevolent or despotic, succeed without the backing of the military apparatchik. Courting the continued support of this constituency is therefore in the interest of a leader who seeks to maintain his hold on the nation's political landscape, hence the excerpts below:

Excerpts 2: I want to commend members of the Multinational Joint Task Force ... I also commend the gallantry of members of our Armed Forces and other security agencies that have continued to provide security for lives and properties across the country. State and local traditional authorities are helping with much needed intelligence in this fight against insurgency (DDB Para 8).

In his commendation of the Armed Forces "that have continued to provide security for lives and properties" what the speaker has not made obvious is that the sustenance of his grip on the nation is aided by the military. While not underplaying the significant roles of the "state and local traditional authorities [who] are helping with much needed intelligence in this fight against insurgency", the co-option of the military and other security agencies is topical in the excerpts above. Whereas the states' authorities have their individual election to contend with, the traditional rulers are by statutes politically neutral.

While not under playing their significance in the electoral process and the realisation of the president's ambition, the military wields more power and are overtly involved in the electoral process. Considering that they have used military might to sway victory in previous elections (for example, the Ekiti 2014 gubernatorial election and the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election), Buhari, a retired General, in his decision to appeal for the support of the military has co-opted a critical segment of the country into his political agenda. The appeal to the military, whose ability to combat growing and escalating nationwide violence has been called to question and critical comments, is self-serving.

The youth forms another bulk of the voting populace that can hardly be ignored by a president whose focus is on re-election. Having alluded to his preparedness to sign the "Not-too-Young-to-Run Bill" in his May 29, 2018 address, *In few days to come, I will be joined by many promising young Nigerians to sign into law the "Not Too Young to Run Bill*, Buhari produced a linguistic masterstroke three days later during the Signing Ceremony:

Excerpts 3: Today is a significant day for us in Nigeria, and most especially our young people – and the role they play in our democracy, politics and national life. We are gathered here for the signing of the "Not Too Young to Run Bill", a landmark piece of legislation that was conceived, championed and accomplished by young Nigerians. The coordinators of the Not Too Young to Run movement have now established a formidable legacy – which is that, in our maturing democracy, if you really want to change something in Nigeria, and if you can organise yourselves and work hard towards it – you can achieve it. The outcome of such efforts is this remarkable feat (NTYR Para 1-3).

In his alignment with the youth and their aspirations, Buhari's opening lines at the Signing Ceremony is noteworthy, *today is a significant day for us in Nigeria, and most especially our young people – and the role they play in our democracy, politics and national life*. The pronoun "us" is a positive politeness marker indicative of inclusiveness, thereby implying that the speaker is "young" at heart. Like his acknowledgement to women, the president applauded the role of "our" (a possessive indicator and appeal to the hearer's positive face) "young people and the role they play in our democracy, politics and national life".

The co-option strategies did not end in chronicling the achievements of the youth in all facets of human endeavour, the speaker ideologically became a youth activist by clamouring for the piece of legislation to extend to the entry age of aspirants to the Senate and Governorship offices. The political agenda of the speech is manifest considering the admonition that the youth should not contest against him in the 2019 election. The contradiction in Buhari's posture in this context which is a departure from his recent description of the Nigerian youth as lazy further underscores the speaker's political agenda.

Excerpts 4: Eligible age for aspirants for members of the State Houses of Assembly will be reduced from 30 to 25 years; Eligible age for aspirants for members of the Federal House of Representatives will be reduced from 30 to 25 years; and Eligible Age for aspirants for Office of the President, will be lowered from 40 to 35 years. Surprisingly, the age limits for Senators and Governors was not reduced, as originally proposed by the sponsors of this Bill. This is an issue that may need to be addressed going forward (NTYR Para 4-5).

Buhari's linguistic co-option strategies were indeed extended to all Nigerians in his appeal to their emotional attachment to the June 12, 1993 aborted Presidential election. The president began the DDB with an appeal to the citizens' positive face as is shown in Excerpts 5. This is a message of solidarity to the citizenry. Furthermore, while the "de-annulment" of the historic election and the recognition of June 12 as Nigeria's new Democracy Day may on the surface be in deference to the wishes of the people, underlying the deft political move is the 2019 presidential election in which Buhari has indicated interest.

Excerpts 5: My Dear Nigerians (DD Para 1)!

The pragmatic import of "my" and "dear" is well documented in Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness strategies. It is possessive and inclusive as well as indicative that the referents are part of a common course and agenda in the Nigerian project, the present administration and the prospects it hold for the people who are so "dear" to the president. Is it not discernible that the citizens that are ideologically dear to the president would likely give him a fresh mandate and be less critical of his administration? Critiqued from another perspective as may be observed from the next excerpts, the president would not leave any political stone unturned in his bid to warm himself to the electorates.

The Press Statement on the posthumous award and the pronouncement of June 12 as Democracy Day provides Buhari another opportunity to further identify with Nigerians.

Excerpts 6: For the past 18 years, Nigerians have been celebrating May 29th, as Democracy Day. That was the date when for the second time in our history, an elected civilian administration took over from a military government. The first time this happened was on October 21st, 1979.

But in the view of Nigerians, as shared by this administration, June 12th, 1993, was far more symbolic of Democracy in the Nigerian context than May 29th or even the October 1st. (June 12 Para 1 and 2).

Among the three historical dates in which Nigerian democracy may have been rooted, Buhari has deferred to the *view[s] of Nigerians* that June 12th, 1993, *was far more symbolic of Democracy in the Nigerian context*. Annually, Democracy Day was, prior to the president's pronouncements, celebrated in Nigeria every May 29, in commemoration of the day in 1999 when Obasanjo assumed office as president in the nation's fourth republic.

The first, second and third republics were terminated by the military. Buhari, a new democratic convert and later-day June 12 convert, played a prominent role in the termination of each republic particularly the Shehu Shagari led second republic. Buhari became the Head of State following the putsch that ousted that civilian administration. The democracy currently being enjoyed in Nigeria is traceable to the relentless agitations among Nigerians. Notwithstanding that Obasanjo was its major beneficiary and got elected on the sentiment that the late M.K.O. Abiola's kinsman should occupy the office that was denied the latter, Obasanjo refused to pander to the wishes of Nigerians including the Yoruba people of Southwest that June 12 should be accorded a national recognition.

Granted that the agenda of Buhari in recognising June 12 runs counter to his anti-democratic antecedents and camaraderie with the military elites including Obasanjo and Ibrahim Babangida who had annulled the election, by his pronouncement Buhari has aligned with Nigerians through a lingua-pragmatic strategy of positive politeness and in co-opting them for political gains.

This section holds that the applaud of women, the recognition of the youth and traditional rulers, the tributes to government functionaries at the sub-national levels, etc., were self-serving and timed as they unveiled the speaker's attempt at enlisting the support of each of these segments for the forthcoming elections. The next section focuses on

another strategy through which Buhari, as a politician, profiles his administration's achievements without admitting its shortcomings, for once.

5.2 Buhari's Performance Profiling

In a bid to justify the enormous goodwill he had enjoyed among Nigerians particularly in the build-up to his election in 2015 and as a counter-strategy against the mounting opposition against his administration as well as to shore up his performance index among other underlying motives in the merchandising of his political agenda, the 2019 elections inclusive, Buhari in his recent language use has taken to performance profiling as are illustrated in the excerpted illustrations below:

Excerpts 7

Today marks the 19th year of our nascent democracy and the 3rd Anniversary of this Administration. I am thankful to Almighty God for bringing us thus far. This administration came at a time that Nigerians needed Change, the Change we promised and the Change we continue to deliver. We have faced a lot of challenges on this journey and Nigerians have stood by us in achieving the three cardinal points of this administration namely; Security, Corruption and the Economy (DDB Para 1).

The Change slogan summarises Buhari's numerous pre-2015 election promises to Nigerians. As earlier observed, there is a consensus that the president has not lived up to his billings and that the "change" agenda was hollow or, more succinctly, that it connotes a negative change. In defence of the "Change" agenda, Buhari's insisted *that Nigerians needed Change, the Change we promised and the Change we continue to deliver*. He claimed to have achieved the "three cardinal points of this administration namely; Security, Corruption and the Economy".

In the exemplification and breakdown of his mouthed achievements on security, corruption and the economy, excerpted language use by the president are provided below:

Excerpts 8

Public safety and security remains the primary duty of this Government. Before this administration came into being 3 years ago, Boko Haram held large areas of land spanning several Local Governments in the North East. Today, the capacity of the insurgents has been degraded. ... happily, 106 Chibok and 104 Dapchi girls, and over 16,000 other persons held by the Boko Haram (DDB Para 3).

In Excerpts 8, the president anchored the success of his administration on the security plank. He scored himself high and claimed an improvement on the situation that he met on ground in the sustenance of the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He credited himself with the rescue of some of the Chibok girls who were abducted before he assumed office. Whereas Buhari did not remind his audience that over two hundred girls, including Leah Sharibu, were abducted from Dapchi, Yobe state, in a replay of the scenario in Chibok, Borno state, he was quick to highlight his success in the rescue of the Dapchi girls.

The president did not however admit that not all the abductees have been released by the terrorists. The speaker's emphasis and achievements against Boko Haram and terrorism at the expense of armed robbery, kidnapping and other violent crimes was deliberate and intended to mask the failure of the administration in these regards.

Excerpts 9

The Niger Delta Region has enjoyed relative peace through social inclusiveness and cooperation of the Elders and the good people of the region. ... The environment clean-up of the region which commenced with the launch in Bodo, Ogoni in June, 2016 is progressing satisfactorily. Furthermore farming assets are being revived and investors in cocoa and palm oil plantations are showing interest (DDB Para 10).

The president's acclaimed sustenance of peace in the oil rich Niger Delta region and the on-going Ogoni clean-up were profiled for political marketing. In like manner, the revival of farming assets and show of interest by investors in cocoa and palm oil plantations are huge security and economic boost to the nation. The president listed these achievements as a way of gaining the upper-hand in the 2019 elections particularly from the Niger Delta region where his performance in the 2015 elections was comparatively unimpressive. Excerpts 10 provide a few achievements of both the anti-corruption stance of the Buhari administration and its economic recovery efforts.

Excerpts 10

The second primary object of this Administration is to fight corruption headlong. Like I have always said, if we don't kill corruption, corruption will destroy the country ... (DDB Para 11).

Various policy measures already put in place to stem the tide of corrupt practices are yielding remarkable results. Some of these key reform policies include: (a) The Treasury Single Account (TSA) has realized Billions of Naira being saved from maintenance fee payable to banks. N200 Billion has also been saved from elimination of ghost workers in public service. The Whistle-Blowing Policy has helped to recover over N500 Billion. ... (DDB Para 12a)

Our foreign reserve has improved significantly to 47.5 billion USD as of May, 2018 as against 29.6 billion USD in 2015. The inflationary rate has consistently declined every month since January, 2017 (DDB Para 17).

Twenty out of thirty-five paragraphs of the DDB, was devoted to Buhari's performance profiling ranging from the fight against corruption to the gains in the economic fronts. The president echoed his success in Agriculture (Para 19), Social Investment Programme including the home grown school feeding programme and N-Power Job Creation Scheme (Para 20), Power generation (Para 21), Transportation (Para 24) among other high profile achievements which ideologically highlighted the welfarist agenda of the Buhari. His linguistic activities were crafted to mask his perceived short-comings, which have become a sing-song among the opposition, but to launder his political image and subsequently increase his electoral fortune. As would be illustrated in the next section, Buhari's speeches were full of veiled agenda-setting.

5.3 Buhari's Ideological Agenda-Setting

Buhari's pronouncements set certain ideological agenda apparently for his re-election bid. Considering that the discursive structures that are selected in political discourse and other spheres of social life are situation-bound, politicians often employ rhetoric as instrument of persuasion, manipulation and merchandising of agenda. Since "language has the power in politics to mask the truth and mislead the public" (Berkes, 2000:1), as presented below, Buhari's language usage though ideologically loaded for political exigencies may on further interrogation be found to be deceptive or misleading.

Excerpts 11:

Public safety and security remains the primary duty of this Government (DDB, Para 3). Efforts are in process for resettlement of IDPs [Internally Displaced Persons] Camps (DDB Para 6).

The idea behind Excerpts 11 is to enlist the support of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria with the assurance that their welfare is paramount to the administration. How long would this promise take? This is in consideration of the exposure of these vulnerable citizens to hunger, rape, epidemics, terrorist attacks and death? Notwithstanding that the president's has repeatedly promised to resettle the IDPs, the plights of the IDPs have yet to improve. The contradiction in Excerpts 11 and 12 underscores the real agenda of Buhari's speeches:

Excerpts 12:

The unfortunate incidences of kidnappings, herdsmen and farmers clashes in several communities which have led to high number of fatalities and loss of properties across the country is being addressed and the identified culprits and their sponsors shall be made to face the wrath of the law. All the three tiers of Government are presently engaged with communities and religious organisations to restore peaceful co-existence among Nigerians (DDB Para 7). ... This administration is pained over the grievous loss of lives and properties occasioned by carnage of insurgency and other forms of criminality in the country. I wish to assure Nigerians that we will not rest until all the criminal elements and their sponsors are brought to justice. Government is boosting the capacity of our security agencies through recruitment of more personnel, training and procurement of modern equipment, enhancement of intelligence gathering as well as boosting the morale in the face of daunting challenges (DDB Para 9).

At one breath the government acknowledges the prevalence of killings and wanton destruction of properties yet it promised to resettle the IDPs. Would they be relocated to the battle fronts from where they had flee *ab initio*? How logical, beyond mere rhetoric, is it that "[A]ll the three tiers of Government are presently engaged with communities and religious organisations to restore peaceful co-existence among Nigerians" when some local governments have been overrun by rampaging terrorists and the States' Chief Executives are merely the Chief Security Officers (CSO) of their states only on paper? Only recently, Abdulahi Yari, Governor, Zamfara State, symbolically resigned his position as his state's CSO. Buhari's ideologically loaded language also manifested in his address to the youth as exemplified below:

Excerpts 14:

The co-ordinators of Not Too Young To Run movement have now established a formidable legacy – which is that, in our maturing democracy, if you really want to change something in Nigeria, and if you can organise yourselves and work hard towards it – you can achieve it. The outcome of such efforts is this remarkable feat (NTYR Para 3).

The “Change” agenda is surreptitiously being put on sale by the speaker through its metaphoric equation with the feat achieved by the youth in seeing through the much sought Act of Parliament which has lowered the eligible age into various elective offices, thereby widening the political space for their inclusion.

Excerpts 15:

This is an opportunity for me to affirm that this Administration will continue to do everything in its power to make Nigeria work for you (NTYR Para 9).

Excerpts 16:

Thus, it may be tempting for you to think of this as the end of the journey. However, it is only the beginning; there is still a lot of work ahead, towards ensuring that young people take full advantage of the opportunities provided not only by this constitutional amendment but also through Nigeria’s boundless prospects (NTYR Para 11).

Buhari’s bid to draw the attention of the youth to his agenda is put in perspective in Excerpts 15 with the promise that he would “make Nigeria work for them”! In Excerpts 16, the underlying agenda being marketed is that Nigeria under his administration has “boundless prospects”. The “boundless prospects” in media, agricultural enterprise, economists, engineers, or law-making, on which the president was claiming credit were listed in the next excerpts. Considering the credit he has claimed for himself in this direction, Buhari as indicated in Excerpts 17 did not mince words in asking the youth to queue behind him for the 2019 elections.

Excerpts 17:

I am confident each one of you will transform Nigeria in your own way – whether through media, agricultural enterprise, economists, engineers, or as lawmakers in your States or at Federal levels, or as State Governors – and even someday, as President. Why not? But please, can I ask you to postpone your campaigns till after the 2019 elections (Para 14)!

The transparency of Buhari’s ideology as linguistically enacted is further exemplified considering his overt acknowledgement that the election season had come coupled with his passionate appeal for a “hitch free elections but also a credible and violence free process”.

Excerpts 18:

Finally, the up-coming months will usher us into another season of general elections. Let me use this opportunity to urge us all to conduct ourselves, our wards and our constituencies with the utmost sense of fairness, justice and peaceful co-existence such that we will have not only hitch free elections but also a credible and violence free process (DDB Para 34).

In acknowledging that elections were on hand, Buhari has unwittingly unmasked the underlying philosophy of his language choices. This goes to confirm this paper’s argument that his language was not neutral but were skewed to gain electoral advantage in the 2019 in which the president had earlier indicated interest.

6. Standpoint

Since political speech is ideologically loaded, self-preserving and are often deceptive, the target audience should not take political language for granted.

7. Conclusion

This paper focused on Buhari’s self-profiling and agenda which were put on sales in his May 29, 2018 broadcast and related pronouncements with the revelation that the president’s language were loaded with ideologies. These were instantiated through the co-option of critical stakeholders, performance profiling and agenda-setting which were aimed at halting the low performance rating of the president and secure for him a fresh electoral mandate. The context and structures of political discourse often unveil the underlying purpose of the speaker’s linguistic activities. The interrogation of such discourse as has been undertaken in this study could guide the target in their reaction to the ideologies of the speaker.

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