Analysing Linguistic Metaphors in the Political Speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Politicians carry a heavy burden on their shoulders during election time. The promise they make to the electorates and their struggle to win the elections are some of the weights they have to bear. The speech they deliver to address their supporters and the nation in general can have a great impact during the election. As part of their strategy to entice people to vote for them, these politicians use different rhetorics in their speeches (Hart & Tindall, 2009). Metaphors are considered as one of the essential forms of rhetoric that these politicians often use. The way in which politicians make use of metaphors in their political speeches can tell more about the character of their struggle (Pennick, 2014). The use of metaphor in political speech aims to assist the listener to visualize what is meant by an expression or a phrase. Politicians use language to convince people and their thoughts, targets and ideas are equitable to make their points vivid to the people. The speaker needs to use various language tools in order to make his message persuasive and understandable to the audience. They seek to comply with the emotions and desires and needs of the listeners. The use of metaphor is one of the essential tools for persuasion and an instrument for propaganda in rhetorical language (Vestermark, 2007).

Beard (2002) contends that the purpose of political speeches is to manipulate listeners so that the speaker will gain and control their power. But the goal of politicians is not primarily restricted to that, they also present facts and sometimes hide truth in order to appeal to their audience's emotions and to affect them. The purpose is to emphasise suitable issues and hide others and one of the basic language tools to do that is the use of metaphor (Vestermark, 2007). Sometimes the speaker does not have to distort the facts when using metaphoric language, the response to address depends on the interpretation in the mind of the listener.

Statement of Problem

The use of metaphor by politicians in their speeches is one of the remarkable features of political language. But the use of metaphors in politics raise question about the certainty of political discourse especially the use of metaphors by politicians to manipulate their supporters (Beard, 2000). Numerous studies were conducted on the use of metaphor in political speeches of different leaders around the world. In Nigerian context, so far, there is scanty work on the use of metaphors in the speeches of Nigerian political leaders. This study seeks to investigate the use of linguistic metaphors by Muhammad Buhari, one of the political leaders, in his political speeches to address Nigeria and his political opponents.

Purpose of the study

The study investigates the use of linguistic metaphors in the political speeches of Muhammad Buhari. More specifically, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the linguistic metaphors used to describe Nigeria and the opposition in Muhammad Buhari's political speeches.
2. To describe the linguistic metaphors manifested to portray the Nigeria and the opposition in Muhammad Buhari's political speeches.

Research Questions:

The study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the linguistic metaphors used by Muhammad Buhari to describe Nigeria and the opposition?
2. How do the linguistic metaphors manifested in the speeches of Muhammad Buhari portray Nigeria and the opposition?

Theoretical and conceptual framework

The study is based on the conceptual metaphor theory founded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and the analysis model of critical metaphor analysis model of critical metaphor analysis by Charteris-Black (2004).

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory and critical metaphor analysis model which serve as the theoretical background of this study will be discussed briefly below.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was introduced first by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their book *Metaphors We Live By*. It belongs to the field of cognitive linguistics which aims at explaining conceptual systems and language with the general study of the brain and the mind (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) is an approach derived from CDA. It was developed by Jonathan Charteris-Black (2004) in his book Corpus Approaches to critical metaphor analysis as an approach for analysing metaphors in

political discourse. The main aim of this approach is to identify the hidden intentions (possibly unconscious and ideology that is underlying language use). Critical metaphor analysis model provides three stages in metaphor studies these are: identification, interpretation and explanation of metaphors. Metaphor identification deals with determining which metaphors are present in a text, and whether they show semantic tension between a literal source domain and a metaphorical target domain. Interpretation highlights the type of social relations that are construed through the metaphors identified. While explanation deals with the way metaphors interact within the context in which they occur (Charteris-Black, 2004).

Significance of the study

This study is important to the general public especially those who have special interest in politics. It will provide them with an avenue to understand how language is used by politicians to deliver their messages especially during election.

Definition of terms

Conceptualisation: is an abstract simplifying view of a phenomenon containing the objects, concepts and other entities that are presumed of interest for some particular purpose and the relationships between them (Smith, 2003).

Language of politics: is a way in which strategies are employed in language use to influence the listener toward a desired attitude or thought.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This part examines the recent literature related to the focus of the study. It highlights the existence of metaphor as a cognitive tool and discusses the use of metaphor in various political discourse.

Metaphor is one of the cognitive linguistic phenomena that have been studied by various researchers. Earlier studies on metaphors viewed it as a mere figure of speech which is usually associated with literary work of art. This suggests that metaphor was regarded as aesthetic linguistic element used for rhetorical purpose (Kovecses, 2002). With a continuous and deep investigation on the phenomenon, new views about concept of metaphor were emerged. That means, there is now a ship in perception of metaphor in terms of cognitive process. This evidently arose especially in the work of Lakoff and Johnson, (1980) *Metaphors We Live By.* Also, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) in the same book postulated that metaphor is considered a cognitive tool that people use to perceive certain concepts rather than a property of language. In the same manner, Massengill and Mahlios (2008) asserted that metaphors are devices that are hidden beneath person's awareness and act as a cognitive device. Prominent scholars on cognitive metaphor such as Lakoff, Turner, and Johnson, claimed that metaphors are found everywhere in human cognitive faculty. The fact that metaphor is frequently used by

every individual whether consciously or otherwise in his/her spoken or written discourse, can be concluded that metaphor is employed by the speaker or writer to express his/her intents to the audience. That means, metaphor is used in different genres of human endeavours.

In political discourse, metaphors are studied in different perspectives depending on the intention of the researcher. Accordingly, metaphors are used as persuasive devices by politicians. Metaphor seems uniquely designed to address the information-processing capacity problem discussed by the political cognition theory advocates. Xu (2010) suggested that metaphor is functional in discourse that can be applied into political speeches, and used it as an analytical tool to help people have a better understanding of ideology and value in political speeches.

In his study titled "Metaphor, Morality, and Politics" Lakoff criticised American government for waging war against Iraqi. He employed a series of conceptual metaphors which reveals American diplomacy to Iraq. However, Cen, (2009) studied different political speeches from the perspective of Pragmatics. He adopted Grice's Co-operative Principles and politeness Principle which claims that maxim of quality requires participants in conversation communication to obey the rules suggested by the Grice's principles. He observes that politicians do say what they believe to be false, and also say that for which they lack evidence, despite the political discourses need to be truthful, thus being persuasive, encouraging and convincing. Moreover, in his study of rhetoric in politics, Hu (2001) examined different political speeches with different background. He explored various common forms of rhetoric that are often widely used by politicians. The forms of rhetoric he found consists of metaphor, metonymy, euphemism, repetition and parallelism which he claimed that in the political speeches such rhetorics have a powerful effect on spreading political knowledge. Therefore, it can be concluded that political discourses can hardly be carried out efficiently without rhetoric.

On the other hand, Xu (2010) analysed political metaphors in six American presidential inaugural addresses and found out several specific conceptual framework in their speeches. He also discovered three functions in the political speeches. These are: simplification, persuasion and motivation. From this, it can be deduced that politics being abstracted and perhaps complicated, common people will be unable to understand if the politician do not try to simplify and make it familiar with people, otherwise there would be no participation in political discourse as argued by Thomson (1999). Also, metaphors in politics are applied to convey policies, convince or persuade the public for action or even to describe political opponent. Therefore, persuasion is a basic purpose that politicians aim at. They try to deliver their emotions and feelings to their citizens through effective metaphors. In the same vein, motivation is another factor in which politician aimed at achieving. Politicians provide

motivation in order to encourage people to behave in a right way. Similarly, Vestermark (2007) investigated four inaugural speeches of American presidents and he discovered that metaphor were used to personify the nation with the aim to make Americans identify with and understand their belief and vision for America. Unlike other researchers who studies inaugural speeches of presidents, Penninck, (2014) studied metaphors in speeches of eight US and UK political leaders while in office during economic crises. He found out that most political leaders used oversimplifying metaphors themes, by which they tried to make crises more understandable by the public.

III. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology of the study. It states the research design of the study, data collection procedure, metaphor identification procedure and method of data analysis. The study employed a qualitative research approach. The sample of the study comprised 12 political speeches of Muhammad Buhari posted online during his political campaign. The sample of this study includes 12 online published speeches of Muhammad Buhari. The duration is from May 1999 to May 2015. May 1999 was the political inception in Nigeria after long period of military rule and Muhammad Buhari has been contesting for presidential office up to May 2015 when he became the current president. Three samples were taken from each election period that is 3 speeches in 1999 election period, 3 speeches in 2003 election period, 3 speeches in 2007 election period and 3 speeches in 2015 election.

Data collection procedure

The data of this study was collected through searching of the following keywords online at: http:www. "Political speech of Muhammad Buhari." The search yielded a large number of published speeches including his inaugural speech. The researchers selected 12 of those speeches that were purely related to his political movements for the purpose of this study.

Metaphor identification procedure

The articles selected produced 8005 words from which 84 linguistic metaphors were identified. The speeches were read and each word or phrase with metaphoric content was highlighted and placed in a separate sheet. This procedure was done three times in order to confirm that no linguistic metaphor was left out. When selecting the linguistic metaphors in the speeches, care was taken to ensure that only words that manifested metaphoric meaning in the context they appear were selected. Hence, not every lexical term was chosen. Finally, these linguistic metaphors were sorted and counted.

Data Analysis procedure

The data analysis was done based on Charteris-Black (2004) approach of critical metaphor analysis which include three

stages. Firstly, the linguistic were identified. Secondly, the linguistic metaphors were interpreted based on the context they were construed. Thirdly, they were categorised based on the conceptual pattern they manifested and further explained by the researchers.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This section presents the results of the study. It begins with the total number of the articles analysed, provides the word counts and presents the linguistic metaphors found with explanation on how they portray the nation and the opposition. The section also restates the research questions the study aims to answer:

1. What are the linguistic metaphors used by Muhammad Buhari to describe Nigeria and the opposition?
2. How do the linguistic metaphors manifested in the speeches of Muhammad Buhari portray Nigeria and the opposition?

The total articles analysed were 12 political speeches of Muhammad Buhari. They generated 8005 words. Out of this number, there were 84 linguistic metaphors used by Muhammad Buhari to portray Nigeria and the opposition. Below is the presentation of the most salient linguistic metaphors.

The linguistic metaphors found and their manifestations are presented below:

Table 4.0.1: Conceptual pattern based on politics is a JOURNEY(30%)

Linguistic Metaphors	Frequency
journey	4
voyage	4
toured	3
speed	4
starts	3
drive	5
Total	26

Table one above which is on conceptual pattern based on politics is a JOURNEY contain the highest linguistic metaphors. It manifested 26 linguistic metaphors from the speech analysed representing 30% of the data analysed. These linguistic metaphors describe the speaker as if he was on a journey to a destination. For example, Muhammad Buhari used these linguistic metaphors in these contexts: "Our **journey** has not been easy. A **voyage** that will take us to the promised land. The journey for victory **starts** with us. It **starts** today". Words highlighted are the linguistic metaphors and the meaning derived from them show that the speaker conceptualised politics as a journey. In his speeches, metaphors serve as a strong source domains given that they provide a clear path with start and end points under this

conceptual pattern. Muhammad Buhari made reference to himself and his followers in the above conceptual domain by using linguistic metaphors that describe the task ahead and their audacity to move on.

Table 4.0.2: Conceptual pattern based on the nation is a HUMAN(19%)

Linguistic Metaphors	Frequency
shoulder	3
revival	4
cleanse	3
afflicted	3
shackles	3
Total	16

The second category conceptual pattern based on the nation is a HUMAN indicate 16 occurrences which accounts for 19% of the data as can be seen in the above table. Muhammad Buhari used linguistic metaphors in his speeches that personified the nation. The linguistic metaphors also portray the opposition as evils that inflicted harm or became burden to the nation. The meaning of these linguistic metaphors can be seen in these examples: "Nigeria will be liberated from the **shackles** of the failures. Our nation has to **cleanse** itself from its dirty past. Nigeria has been **afflicted** by a strange illness". The linguistic metaphors in this category conceptualised the nation as a person in difficult situation and needs someone to rescue it.

Table 4.0.3: Conceptual Pattern based on the Nation is a BUILDING(18%)

Linguistic Metaphors	Frequency
rebuild	3
dilapidated	4
collapse	4
window	3
stabilise	4
Total	18

The third category conceptual pattern based on the Nation is a BUILDING highlights the occurrence of linguistic metaphors 18 times which represents 18% of all the linguistic metaphors realised. In this category Nigeria has been described as a building that has structures but were destroyed by the opposition in this sense the ruling party. Muhammad Buhari was careful in his choice of linguistic metaphors under this category in order to portray the gravity of the destruction done by the opposition. For example, Muhammad Buhari used these expressions in his political speeches: "We will **rebuild** Nigeria to regain its position on the world stage. Nigeria has **collapsed** because of endemic corruption. We have to upgrade our **dilapidated** nation". All the linguistic metaphors in this category except the term 'Window' imply starting over. After a building collapses, or in a state of dilapidation it needs to be rebuilt and become stabilised. Muhammad Buhari wanted to be consistent with a project of national "refoundation". The

window of opportunity however, shows that Nigeria is a building with a window that beckons prosperity.

Table 4.0.4: Conceptual Pattern based on the Opposition are COMBATANTS(25%)

Linguistic Metaphors	Frequency
attack	5
defeat	3
fight	3
hostage	3
battle	3
territory	4
Total	21

The last conceptual pattern based on Opposition are COMBATANTS manifests a significant number of linguistic metaphors. The frequency of these linguistic metaphors show 21 occurrence representing 25% of the data analysed. This conceptual pattern is similar to that of War. The opposition here were described as COMBATANTS. The meaning portrayed by the metaphors is thus an instances of war for example, Muhammad Buhari said: "This is a **fight** against the dark forces of PDP. The nation is held **hostage** to their greed for long. We have to **attack** all plans and over throw their government". The meaning portrayed by these linguistic metaphors as exemplified are understood to have signalled a fierce and strong message to the opposition.

V. DISCUSSION

Accordingly, metaphor is considered essential in political speeches owing to the fact that it is an effective persuasive device to many politicians. The finding of this study reveals that Muhammad Buhari adopted a confrontational discourse in which opponents become the main focus of his choice of metaphors. He conceptualised his speeches (during electioneering campaigns) in terms of war against previous regimes and portrayed former government with destructive metaphors and current opponents with conflict metaphors. Besides, he used conceptual metaphors to personalise the nation. That means, he emerges with a discourse of national refoundation in which he distance himself and his struggle for change, from previous government. Hence, the nation and opposition are considered midpoints of his discourse and choice of metaphors.To sum up, he used conflict metaphors to describe his opposition and his revolution. Also, he used destructive metaphors to personify the nation. Therefore, this finding is in congruent with Vestermark, (2007), Ferrari, (2007), and Moreno, (2008).As the finding demonstrates, it can be concluded that Buhari used political metaphors to justify his commitment to reactivate and revive the country that has been suffering from depressions. Such linguistic devices are important, sometimes necessary manipulative tool of political discourse because events are too numerous for public consumption.

VI. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, political metaphors are consciously employed by the politicians to entice and persuade the electorates to believe with their visions, policies and to develop confidence in them. In the same manner, metaphors allow the general public to grasp the meaning of political event, feel a part of the process. They also have effects because of their ability to resonate with underlying symbolic representation residing at the unconscious level. Metaphors fit into the prevailing notion of information-processing model of public knowledge of politics. Because of the information-processing demand, people cannot pay attention to all aspects of political evidence. Therefore, something needed to simplify decision making and metaphor addresses that need.

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