

# A Stylistic Analysis of Selected Speeches of Prominent Politicians in Adamawa State of Nigeria.

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**Abstract:** This is a corpus-based study which is focused on the stylistic analysis of selected political speeches of prominent politicians of Adamawa State. The researcher deliberately presents two speeches of His Excellency Murtala Nyako the then governor of Adamawa State and Dr. Jonathan Silas Zwingina, Deputy Senate Leader and Senator representing Adamawa South Senatorial District respectively. The corpus was analysed based on Leech and Short's (1981), checklist and stylistic categories: graphology, lexical, syntactic and rhetorical features. The lexical features of the speeches show that, the politicians used the lexical items for self-identification and to show that the context of the speeches center on politics. It was also discovered that the politicians used rhetorical devices to capture the minds of the audience. However, the tone and texture of the two speakers slightly vary. This was speculated through the lexical items used by the two speakers. It was also identified that compound complex sentences were used in their speeches, in order to compress more information to their audience. This study recommends the use of simple sentences by the politicians as this will enhance more comprehension by their targeted audience. It was also recommended that the politicians should be objective and shun their personal sentiments in public speeches.

**Key words:** Adamawa State, political speeches senatorial district, stylistic analysis.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This study strives to review and analyse the language of selected Adamawa state political elites as they discuss political issues. The political elites whose speeches were

analysed in this paper are Senator (Dr.) Jonathan Silas Zwingina and His Excellency Murtala Nyako. It embraces those that are involved in political practising and politicking as civilians. Nigeria has witnessed different kinds of political dispensations after independence. These leaders have, one time or the other, made formal speeches in order to unveil their minds by either supporting the political activities or protesting the actions or in actions of the federal government.

Language use at different speech events depends largely on the context of situation that is based on the linguistic features – field, tenor and mode (Malinowski, 1949 and Halliday, 1964). Field, tenor and mode describe how the context of situation determines the kinds of meaning that are elicited. Field here refers to the on-going activity and the particular purposes that the use of language is serving within

the context of that activity; it includes the subject matter as one special manifestation,

The politicians share conflicting educational backgrounds, cultures, and geographical locations. These enhance diversities in choice of words, clauses to suit and convince their congregations. In most cases, the potentiality of the politicians determines how excellent the speeches are composed and presented to their congregations. Some of the speeches contain ambiguities that create communication gaps to their audience. This study is focused on the stylistic analysis of the selected speeches of politicians in order to ease the difficulty being encountered by the audience in understanding the speeches.

The objectives of this study are to; explicate the nature of the lexical choice and functions. Rhetorical devices prominent in the speeches and functions. Contextual semantic implications of the features and forms or types of sentences employed in the structure of their speeches.

### *Concept of Speech*

Speech is the vocalized form of human communication. It is based upon the syntactic combination of lexical and names that are drawn from every large vocabulary. Each spoken word is crated out of the phonetic combination of a limited set of vowel and consonant speech sound units. These vocabularies, the syntax which structures them, and their set of speech sound units, differ creating the existence of thousand different types of mutually unintelligible human languages (Jen, 2011)

According to Mathews, (1997) speech is a human communication through available language. So, speech sounds are made with air exhaled from the lungs which passes

between the vocal cords in the larynx and out through the vocal tract. Speech is also described in terms of syntax, lexicon (inventory of words or morphemes) and phonology (sounds). Speech is defined by Fasold, (1990) as a complex process in which the eating and breathing mechanisms are used to generate patterns of sounds which form words and sentences to express thoughts.

### *Types of Speech*

#### *1. Informative Speech:*

According to Fakuade (2007) speech is classified into two sub – headings; informative and persuasive speeches.

Informative speech is aimed at providing a clear and correct information to listeners which will teach them about something. The main purpose of speaking is to inform or to present information to an audience so that they will understand and remember it. However, any speech is meant to attain the aforementioned objectives is classified as an informative speech.

## 2. *Persuasive Speech:*

This type of speech is meant to get others to change their feeling, belief, or behaviour. Our target in making a persuasive speech is to convince our listeners to do what we want them to do or to change their opinion about something to agree with ours. The goal of persuasive talks is to try to change or influence others.

### *Style and Stylistics*

The concept of style and stylistics have diverse notions. That is, they have different interpretations. Crystal and Davy (1969) define style as some or all of the language habits shared by a group of people at one point in time or over a period of time. They opine that style may refer to some or all of the language habits of one person as when we talk of Shakespeare's style'(s), or the style of James Joyce, or when we discuss questions of disputed authorship.

Eneke (2006) citing Werberg (1967) sees style in terms of choice. She affirms a good style consists of choosing appropriate symbolization of experience one wishes to convey. Similarly, Fakuade (1998) in Warren (1952) views style as the selection and ordering of language. Warren's contention about style is also based on choice.

### *Stylistics*

Agu, (2008), opines that style in works of art brings one into the discourse of stylistics. That is, stylistic is a term used in scientific analysis of literary texts.

According to Fakuade (1998), stylistic is the study of style determined by forms of words, that are either scientific or methodological that are collected and utilized in content. However, the notions of the above scholars are in line with Chapman (1973) who sees stylistics as the study of various styles. Stylistics serves as a tool that identifies how language is being used in context.

Crystal and Davy (1969: 13) explicate the central requirement of any linguistically oriented approach by the classification of stylistics effect in that it should provide single clear technique of description which will allow the student to cope with any piece of language he wants to study. It is one procedure which if carefully followed will focus attention on all that is interesting in a piece of language and ensure that no item of potential significance is over looked. Stylistics is concerned with the analysis of

literary works, so that the sense of stylistics appropriateness or suitability can be seen as a point of communicative competence. Fakuade (1998) identifies that stylistics is the confluence between the literary and linguistic rivers. Stylistics can also be said to be the study of the varieties of language functions. This is based on the notion that different stylistics forms give language the varieties needed in order to make the language perform the various functions it is designed to perform.

### *Analytical Approach*

There are various linguistic approaches to be explored before arriving at the linguistic features. These approaches include; linguistic stylistic, text linguistic, discourse analysis among others. This study adopts general stylistic approach.

Stylistic on its own is seen as a linguistic study of different styles. (Chapman 1973). According to Agu, (2008), it is a product of social situation, implying that there is a common relationship between language use and sociopolitical situations. With the above notion, stylistics is taken as an integral part of sociolinguistics, in the sense that it studies human in relation to their society. In another development, stylistics could also be described as an academic field, which studies certain aspects of language variation. This is the reason why Crystal and Davy (1969) emphasize that stylistic aims at "analyzing language habits with a view to identifying from the General mass of linguistic, features common to English as used on every conceivable occasion ..." (Crystal and Davy: 10) therefore, the general stylistic method of analysis applied in this study, covers three major benefits. It gives room to be able to identify the prominent or foregrounding stylistic features of the text. It also compliments the analyst to be voluntarily mindful of the various kinds of social disparities, which the inherent linguistic features are identified with. This approach enables the analyst to adopt the technique of arranging these features syntactically. This will unveil the internal patterning of various texts. The above approaches induced Crystal and Davy (1969) conclude that the central requirement of stylistics is to provide a single clear technique of description with which to cope with any literary piece of language. They are of the view that:

*The central requirement of any linguistically oriented approach to the classification of stylistic effect is that it should provide a single, clear technique of description which will allow the student to cope with any piece of language he wants to study. (Crystal and Davy: 13 -14).*

Meanwhile, this approach is normally synchronically applied to the codes available in the English language currently of this research as Oyeomini cited in Chapman (1973). This technique of description is what Chapman (1973) and Crystal and Davy (1969) refer to as code and linguistic levels of analysis respectively. According to Crystal and Davy (15) the levels of analysis could be:

Phonetics/Graphetics, Phonology/Graphology,  
Grammar/Lexis and Semantics.

### *Language and Politics*

It is widely speculated that language and politics are connected; language is considered as the medium channel of expression of politics. It serves as a means by which politics or political discourse and thoughts are mostly discharged. According to Dixon, and Asher, (Editor) (1977), language is the most important point of entry into habits of thought of people. It embeds within itself cumulative association derived from the total experience of its people'. In the same spirit, Dixon avers, 'in politics words have a powerful effect'. Dixon views that Orwell sees political language as being designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and that 'with words we govern men.' He adds, 'language is the means by which political ideas are transmitted to the community,' while in (55), he views that Locke claims that the strength of language in politicking is enormous. And at another setting, Ranney (1975:130) submits that four hostile newspapers were the equivalent of 100,000 enemy troops on the field of battle underlining the extent to which political language is itself a weapon. He claims further that every political authority will lead to justify itself by an appeal to language in its symbolic or realistic sense. It is apparent from the various opinions stated above that language is the key factor in political behaviour concerning mobilizing people to support and acceptance; it is this relatedness of language and politics that justifies the need for work in order to examine and highlight features inherent in the language of the political practitioners.

### *The Corpus*

In view of the large number of politicians, especially prominent ones in Nigeria, this work narrows to Adamawa state prominent politicians. This size of the population is minimized to a manageable number. We focused on the stylistic analysis of selected speeches of some politicians in Adamawa state; His Excellency Murtala Nyako and Senator (Dr.) Jonathan Zwingina.

The corpus for this paper comprises of two written speeches of selected politicians in Adamawa State which were presented at different occasions. These are:

- i. Senator (Dr.) Jonathan Silas Zwingina: Senatorial Scorecard
- ii. His Excellency Real Admiral Murtala Inyako: Former Governor of Adamawa State

Though, no effort has been made to measure weight of the speeches which shared degree of commonality. Ordinarily the speeches supposed to deal with similar topic, time and space.

## II. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data for analysis were directly collected from party archives at secretariat of People Democratic Party (PDP) and the All People Congress (APC) respectively. There are disparities in stylistic features of selected speeches of politicians in Adamawa State. This study adopted the Leech and Short (1981) checklist which focuses on categories at the level of lexical and grammatical categories.

### *The Analysis of the Selected Speeches:*

#### Graphological Features:

According to Crystal (2008), graphology is the study of the writing system of a language, including the orthographic conventions that have been devised to turn speech into writing, using any available technology. These could be pen, ink, typewriter, electronic screen and printing press. On the same view, linguists often find it useful to draw parallels between this system and the system of spoken language; this is based solely on punctuation usage in the selected speeches as it is more notable than other graphological items. The use of capitalizations was clearly observed in both speeches selected to this study. The primary objectives for capitalization in the speeches is to attract the attention of the readers and ease the comprehension of the texts.

#### *Text 1: Text of H.E. M. Nyako:*

*Speech By His Excellency, Gov. Murtala H. Nyako, CFR, GCON Executive Governor Adamawa State At A Grand APC Rally, Mahmud Ribadu Square Yola, Adamawa State*

#### *Text 2: The of Sen. (Dr.) J.S. Zwingina:*

### SENATORIAL SCORE CARD

Being an address delivered at the Adamawa South Senatorial Forum, held at the Yola International Hotel on Saturday 6th August, 2005

By

Senator (Dr) Jonathan S. Zwingina

Deputy Senate Leader & Senator Representing Adamawa South Senatorial District.

The PDP Zonal Chairman

Honourable Member of the House of Representatives

Honourable Member of the State House of the State House of Assembly

PDP Local Government Party Chairman

PDP Council Chairmen and Development Area Administrators

PDP Elders, Women and Youth Leaders

Loyal party members

Members of the Press

Ladies and gentlemen

*Use of Capitalization*

Fakuade (2009) sees capitalization as a form of punctuation that assists and guides the sighting the text clearly and helps the mind to comprehend the written text. It is used normally at the beginning of every statement and after the use of full stop. On the same vain, capitalization comes after a question mark, exclamation mark, particular day, week, or month, names of year, proper nouns and abbreviations.

*Text 1: H.E. M. Nyako:*

In the above text of His Excellency Murtala Nyako, capital letters have been used in the title to display how important they are. This also portrays relevance of the words written in capital letters.

*Text 2: Jonathan S. Zwinga*

“May I also commend our great party, PDP at the National and State levels for providing us the vehicle of victory and a platform of achievement and sense of fulfilment as individual...”

From the above text, the use of abbreviation ‘PDP’ in place of Peoples Democratic Party makes the speaker concise, saves time and space in the speech.

*Lexical Features*

According to Otagburugu (1996) lexical features are the vocabulary items of a language. In another words, is the study of various levels of a language – the form and function of the words in a language are clearly parsed.

The vocabularies used in the two speeches are simple and clear to the audience. The words are ranged between formal and colloquial words. These can be clearly seen in the both texts.

*Text II*

His Excellency, Governor Murtala Nyako’s Speech:

Let me be honest enough to admit that until a few months ago, Adamawa State was a PDP State. We have over the years scored huge victories in past elections, but suddenly the PDP leadership and the evil few of Adamawa State indigenes residing in Abuja became bent on meting out gross injustice onto us, not just on the Party, but the whole of our good people who have been massively voting our candidates into victory. The impunity and wrong doings against us include: -

- (a) The unjust dissolution of the State EXCO,
- (b) The illegal replacement of a duly elected Adamawa State House of Assembly candidate with an unknown person, among others.

The above paragraph invariable is a political register, the tone, dictions and structures display clearly the democratic speech.

*The Use of Nouns*

A noun is a naming word. It can be either boldly mentioned or merely implied. (Daura, 2005). It occupies different positions in sentence formation. This enhances various functions in sentence analyses. Thus, it functions as subject of the verb, object of the verb, subject compliment, object compliment or compliment of preposition. These can be identified in following extracts:

**Text I:**

Before I proceed, I must repeat my appreciation to our party elders,

The underlined noun phrase (NP) functions as the object of the verb ‘must repeat’, because the action falls directly on it.

‘We plan to exchange ideas on developments affecting the Constituency, the state, the National Assembly and within the nation in general’.

‘We’ functions as the subject of the verb ‘plan to change’ as the doer of the action.

‘On development’ functions as the compliment of the preposition ‘on’ which modifies place.

*Use of Abstract and Common Nouns in Political Speeches:*

The both speeches of Dr. Zwingina and Nyako’s styles use abstract and common nouns. For instance;

*Text II: Nyako’s*

*Your Excellences, respected leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to caution that we are now confronted with a situation of extreme level of impunity and lawlessness in Nigeria. “Just last week we in Adamawa State had a taste of this high level of impunity when the President came visiting. On an occasion that was supposed to bring joy to the people, sorrow and suffering was visited on us by agents of Abuja. The whole of Yola Town was shut down, **Businesses** were interrupted, **Banks** were closed, markets were shut down, **schools** were closed, **shops** were locked, and **streets** were deserted, thus turning our state capital into a ‘ghost town’.*

The highlighted words are plain examples of abstract and common nouns in his speech; joy, sorrow, suffering, businesses, shops and streets. However, the speaker intends to use such words in order to arise the emotion of his audience to compare the poor leadership and bad governance of the ruling government.

*Text I: Dr. Zwingina’s:*

*‘In particular, I would like to express my appreciation to the president of the Senate, Senator Ken Nnamani, Deputy Senate president, Senator Ibrahim Mantu, the other principal officers of the Senate and all distinguished senators for providing me with love, respect and dignity of the senate family for which I shall always remain proud’*

The speaker voluntarily selected some abstract nouns of emphasis and to reveal his mood of the situation; appreciation, love, respect and dignity.

#### *Use of Compound Complex Sentences:*

According to Quirk et al (1972), sentence that contains two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses is considered compound complex sentence. Even though, the speech of Dr. Zwingina entails different sentence types, the use of compound complex sentences was equally speculated in his speech.

*‘I am aware that while we, who come from Abuja, stand to gain and learn from discussions with our home leaders and supporters, it is my belief that our experiences in our various places of work, as well as our exposure to national and international development, will also enrich the knowledge, of home-based members of our forum’*

We can virtually say; the use of compound complex sentences is to compress more messages in few sentences. This makes the speech livelier to the audience. However, plain examples of compound and complex sentences could be spotted in Dr. Zwingina’s extract. This as well could be clearly seen in His Excellency Murtala’s speech:

*Let me be honest enough to admit that until a few months ago, Adamawa State was a PDP State. We have over the years scored huge victories in past elections, but suddenly the PDP leadership and the evil few of Adamawa State indigenes residing in Abuja became bent on meting out gross injustice onto us, not just on the Party, but the whole of our good people who have been massively voting our candidates into victory. The impunity and wrong doings against us.*

The first sentence in the above speech is an example of complex sentence – principal and secondary clauses joined together with subordinate conjunction.

#### *Use of Simile*

According to Ewuzie (2009), simile is a comparison between two distinctly different objects by the use of ‘as’ and ‘like’.

#### *Text I: Nyako’s*

*Members of the APC working with our fellow Nigerians for our good must now resolve to bring these killings to a halt; the killing must be stopped; our Nation must go back to those halcyon years of part of General Yakubu Gowon’s memorable tenure as our Head of State, decent period in an era of a decent man; it is God-given to Nigeria by the Almighty.*

The above text shows the plain disparity between the present era and the era of the past hero’s – General Yakubu Gowon. His era is compared as a decent era of a decent God-given Head of State.

#### *Text II: Dr. Zwingina’s:*

*‘ The youths and women groups will have their own shares of these loans so as to engage them in productive activities to boost personal earnings as well as the economy of the state’*

It is as well speculated in the above text of Dr. Zwingina’s speech, the use of simile, whereby he compares two entities using ‘as’, and ‘as well as’ in the constructions.

#### *Use of High Tone:*

#### *Text I: Nyako’s*

*“We feel that Abuja has become a captive in the hands of the ‘evil-few’ who are bent on destroying this country in pursuit of their narrow selfish interest. For now, they have succeeded in stagnating the economy, derailing our democracy and most of all destabilizing our peace and unity...”*

In the above speech of His Excellency Murtala Nyako, there is element of confrontation and high state of mind. This plainly shows the contrary side of the speaker to the ruling governance. However, the reverse is the case in the speech of Dr. Zwingina:

*“In our forum today, we plan to exchange ideas on developments affecting the Constituency, the state, the National Assembly and within the nation in general. I am aware that while we, who come from Abuja, stand to gain and learn from discussions with our home leaders and supporters. It is my belief that our experiences in our various places of work, as well as our exposure to national and international developments, will also enrich the knowledge, of home based of our forum”.*

Though there is disparity between the two speakers’ context and notion. One can see clearly the tone and emotion of the speakers.

### III. CONCLUSION:

In line with the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the politicians often use simple vocabulary, abstract and concrete nouns which enhance the comprehension of the audience. The study also reveals the use of compound and complex statements in order to compress more information to the audience. Though, such sentences create some barriers to the average listeners. It was also discovered that the use of Rhetorical devices is common in the politicians’ speeches. This shows the level of proficient and add more values to the explanation by the politicians. Personal interest is very common in the speech of the average politicians in their public addresses. This discloses the stand of the speaker in such arena.

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ink, typewriter, electronic screen and printing press. On the same view, linguists often find it useful to draw parallels between this system and the system of spoken language; this is based solely on punctuation usage in the selected speeches as it is more notable than other graphological items. The use of capitalizations was clearly observed in both speeches selected to this study. The primary objectives for capitalization in the speeches is to attract the attention of the readers and ease the comprehension of the texts.

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