PRESUPPOSITION, RELEVANCE AND KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION: A STUDY OF IMO STATE 2019 ELECTION POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

It is an unarguable fact that politics, just like every human endeavour, thrives on encounters and interactions. Politics generates discourse flowing from two ends, the political actors, their oppositions or the masses. These discourses emanate to either project views or to counter the views of the other as the case may be. This is to say that such discourse tries to influence political processes and actions. This paper dwells on the exploration of the political discourse in the pre and post 2019 elections in Imo state. The data for this study were collected from discourse flowing from both ends of the divide. Some online data were collected. Also, some audio and video tapes were transcribed and analyzed. The data were analyzed using political discourse analysis as well as the presupposition and relevance theory. The results revealed that discourse participants in their encounters and engagement drew on common ground they shared to generate relevant discourses that were potent enough to galvanize the masses into action to change the polity. The paper then concludes that the masses have powers they can wield to change the ugly trend of things in the society. Recommendations were then made on the need for political actors to be more responsible to their duties and exercise restraint in the use of power. The masses themselves should also be responsible enough not to play sycophancy but to use their voices to chart a new course for the society.

Keywords: Political Discourse, communication, Political advertising and Presupposition

Introduction

Every human endeavour thrives on communication. From science and technology to business, education, healthcare, politics and governance, communication is a binding force as well as a growth catalyst, for it is in communication that philosophies and ideologies are explicated for the consumption of others. On the other hand, communication could have a barrier effect when used to negate its functions and principles. Communication is rooted in language, the vehicle of human expressions. Language enables humans to construct their world when they bring their dialogic capabilities to bear. This is captured in Armstrong's (2010:1) postulation that language is rooted in communication where it has a strong interplay with its users and where it functions to express ideas, values, beliefs and attitudes of members of a speech community. Language in communication involves the use of utterances and stretches of utterances. These stretches of language as used in communication have come to be identified by language scholars as discourse.

Discourse, simple put, is any layer of language beyond the sentence. It focuses on language use in communication (Philo, 2017). It encompasses language use in communication and, interaction in social situations and contexts among interactants. Discourse is a multidisciplinary concept as it crisscrosses all aspects of human endeavor, sociology, psychology politics and so many others. Thus, there is political discourse domiciled in the critical look at all manner of communication and discursive acts reproduced in social and political spheres. Van Dijk's (2002) thoughts on political discourse is that; it focuses on the nature of activities accomplished by political texts, it has actors that include politicians, opponents and the masses, it is done either to influence political process or clamour for responsible actors so as to reverse the ugly state of affairs.

Statement of Problem

Political discourse is, thus, the subject of enquiry in this study. Such discourse domiciled in politics with a varied array of actors and their domains of encounters and intentions surely has attendant and emergent problems. This study, therefore, addresses the problem of power struggles and resistance amongst political actors evident in the discourses that flow from them. It investigates the clash of interest and the positive self-presentation and negative other presentation amongst actors which find expression in discourse and pragmatic propositions and their deductive inferences such as presupposition. Politics involves the activities of politicians and their opposition. Thus, there is usually discourse flowing from such groups which aims at influencing political processes, activities and actions. Politics is a call to service. In a sane society, politicians emerge for true leadership purposes. They are the group of individuals who have received the mandate to use the authority bestowed on them, to work for societal development, social stability and order. Barne-Barry and Hody (1995:3) notes that those who possess authority have gotten it from those who will, on the long run, be affected by the actions and decisions of the authority holders.

This is to say that, the masses who give their mandate have also placed their lives at the mercies of those who have received such mandates – the politicians. It is in line with the foregoing that Chukwu (2016:214) posits that a leader is a custodian of public mandate and, thus, should be answerable and accountable to the people, working in conformity with the dictates of public trust for societal development.

In our society, politics and wielding of authority have witnessed debasement in recent times. People aspire for political positions making promises to build castles in the air for the masses and once they get hold of power, they use it for practices that dehumanize those that put them in power. These acts herald clashes of interest evident in discourses and actions that flow from the masses in a bid to dismantle bad leadership and usher in a more healthy and just society. The problem of clash of interest in political domains, the discursive acts that emanate from them and how meaning is inferred from such discourse propositions through presupposition anchored on relevance and common ground triples as the problem of this study

Gap

Hitherto, political discourse has always centred on the discourse produced by political actors alone. This is in line with a very narrow view of political discourse as dwelling on the talk of professional politicians or political institutions who Wundt (1990) asserts are central players on the polity paid for their activities. Thus, studies of this kind have always centred on discursive acts emanating from them such as campaign speeches, passing of laws, making interviews, political talk shows, political advertising and their likes. This is to say that there has been continued exploration of the language used by political actors with all its flamboyance and flowery nature. Little attention has been given to the discourse from the other end of the divide. This study has undertaken to juxtapose the flow of discourse from the two ends of the divide. In so doing, the potency and power of discourse that criticizes societal decay and clamours for responsible actors is brought to bear.

Objectives And Research Goals

This research set out to achieve the following goals and objectives

- To state what political discourse is.
- To investigate the semantic and pragmatic import of political discourse.
- To isolate the types of meaning in political discourse.
- To investigate which meanings are stated and which ones are presupposed in political discourse.

Research Questions

The following research question served as guide to the study.

- How inferential is political discourse?
- How evident is presupposition in political discourse?
- Does background knowledge facilitate utterance interpretation in political discourse?
- Does political discourse mean more than it explicates?

Literature Review

This section is a review of all concepts and terms related to the study. This study dwells on discourse, particularly political discourses and how they are analyzed. Discourse is language in use, a linguistic as well as a social phenomenon. Discourse is a functional entity that encompasses language in use, communication of belief as well as their cognition in social situations (van Dijk 1997a:2). This functional view of discourse takes cognizance of social situational context and, by extension, meaning construction. Going by this view, any discourse that has the political sphere as its social situation becomes political discourse.

Political discourse has recently received the beam light of researches because of the state of affairs globally. Kirvahdze and Samnidze (2016:164) posit that political discourse centres on the language used generally in social and political spheres of communication. The authors have also isolated features of political discourse to include struggle for political power and its consolidation as well as war with words in order to provoke negative attitude in the case of misrule or bad governance. Political discourse and its analysis is thus a very broad enterprise. This must have informed van Dijk's (1997) postulation that politicians are not the only participants in the domain of politics and, by extension, political discourse given that once politics and its discourse are located in the public sphere, many participants become engaged and these include all that interact with political communication. Johnson and Johnson (2000) lending their voice to the explication of this concept assert that political discourse is the formal exchange of reasoned views as to which several alternative courses of action should be taken to solve societal problems .

Having established what political discourse is, attention will revert to political discourse analysis henceforth PDA. The domain of PDA is text itself. Van Dijk (1997) asserts that PDA focuses on the nature of activities and practices accomplished by political text which include; reproduction of political power, power abuse and domination, forms of resistance or counter power against domination. Fairclough (1995) notes that PDA explores the discursive acts and consequences of social and political inequality that emanate from domination. PDA, thus, explores the text and how it functions in the encounters of

participants who aim to influence political processes, political relations, ideologies and values. In all, processes of decision making, inequality, attitudes, equity tolerance, freedom, and justice are extracted from political discourses.

Suffice it to say, then, that as political discourse has many actors and intentions, PDA also has a varying array of duties to perform. Van Dijk (1997) uses the notion of political cognition to sum what happens in PDA. Political cognition implies that actions and discourses are evaluated and interpreted using shared social knowledge and political attitudes as guide. This brings us to the notion of social situation or context. Texts are always contextualized and communication events, participants and their actions and encounters are the nuclei of context. It is the context of use that will determine the function of political discourse-persuasive or corrective. It is also the context in which a text appears that will allow for inferences about power relations and interest which, most times, are not explicitly stated.

This also leads us to meaning and knowledge construction in discourse. A discourse originator has inherent messages put across which are expected to be deduced or extracted by other participants in the discourse event. A participant who has been exposed to a discourse event is expected to generate new information and ideas from such discourse. This generation of ideas, so to say, doubles as meaning or knowledge construction. Van Dijk (2008:86) sees knowledge construction as the complex act of processing and negotiating meaning from a discourse event. This implies that knowledge and meaning are both mentally and socially constructed. With what is socially acceptable, a discourse originator produces knowledge which is co-constructed by other participants in the discourse event. This meaning construct is a very active process of tasking the mental faculty to generate information from a discursive act.

The foregoing has brought certain things to bear. Political discourse is domiciled in the social and political spheres of the society and may emanate to achieve political domination or to dismantle such dominance. Again, political discourse analysis centres on the exploration of these discourses and their intended meaning, taking into consideration the contexts and social situation of their production which also determine and affect meaning construction. Thus, discourse interpretation and knowledge construction is, to the most part, hinged on inference, such as presupposition, which the researcher will subsequently explore.

Every discourse act has the intent of conveying certain kinds of information encapsulated in utterances. It is worth pointing out that in discourse also, political discourse inclusive, certain facts are taken for granted and left unsaid or unexplicated. Domaneschi (2016) re-echoes this when he asserts that most of the

information exchanged in verbal interactions are implicitly conveyed, presupposition taking up a larger chunk of this implicit level of linguistic communication. Presupposition, henceforth PSP, as an aspect of discourse meaning is a multidisciplinary concept which has continued to receive research inquiry in humanistic fields such as linguistic, philosophy and psychology. In recent times, PSP has come to dominate a larger chunk of literature in pragmatics.

PSP captures the underlying assumptions taken for granted when making an utterance. Finch (2000) cites Frege (1892) as stating that PSP refers to the implicit information of proposition embedded in an utterance. The term PSP was introduced by Frege, a German Logician in 1892 as it was used as a mutual ground for conversations denoting what discourse participants know, and can infer. Beaver and Genrts (2014) define PSP as an implicit assumption about the world or background belief relating to an utterance whose truth is taken for granted in discourse. They illustrate with the proposition "I want to do it again" stating that the truth that the subject has done it before is taken for granted and is, thus, presupposed. It concludes that a PSP must be mutually assumed by the speaker and hearer for the utterance to be considered appropriate in context. Still on the explication of the concept of PSP, Domaneschi (2016) asserts that it denotes that the use of a singular term presupposes the existence of the individual denoted and concludes that certain truths are taken for granted in proposition. This fact is instantiated below. Proposition: Ken died in penury.

PSP (a): Ken existed. b. Ken is dead.

The illustration indicates that the PSP is taken for granted and not explicitly stated. Such presupposed truths can be deduced or inferred using the background knowledge (common ground) shared by the interactants. The foregoing has made certain establishments. In discursive acts, certain truths are taken for granted and left unexplicated. Again, it is the background knowledge shared by the interactants that facilitates the deductive inference to arrive at meanings not stated. The correction between PSP and common ground will be discussed later.

Researchers have come to categorize PSP into two; semantic and pragmatic. Qualif (2017:45) states that PSP involves the specification of the concept of truth of logical forms or proposition and that semantic PSP is the relation between sentences where one entails from the other and, the truth of the second draws from that of the first. Thus, SI semantically entails S2 if all situations in which S1 is true, S2 is true also. Qualif illustrates with these sentences.

1. Bill managed to come on time

2. Bill came on time

3. Bill tried to come on time

4. Bill did not come on time

Sentence 1 entails 2 for they have truth value; sentence 4 negates sentence 1 and thus cancels/renders sentence 2 false. Thus, negation changes sentence entailment. Still on semantic PSP, Domaneschi (2016) expressing the Fregean view opines that it dwells on the truth and falsity of an utterance given that "a sentence P semantically presupposes a sentence q if we need the truth of q in order to treat P as endowed with sense". Thus, John is dead entails that John existed. Domaneschi (2016) cites Rusell (1905) as stating that the definite descriptions like proper names function to express an existence claim and in that regard, every sentence is laden with either truth or falsity, especially the non-denoting expressions. Thus "John is dead" has "John existed" as entailment. "The present king of France is bald" has "there is a present king of France" and "he is bald" as entailments. These entailments can only hold if the proposition is true.

It is in line with the foregoing that Qualif (2017:45) posits that semantic PSP has propositional logic as its central focus and he cites Kempson (1977) as calling it three valued logic. His argument here is that, logically, semantic representations are not based on two valued system of truth or falsity but that there is provision for a third possibility which is neither true nor false, otherwise known as truth valueless. The sentence, "the bishop of morocco is wise" is true if such a person exists. If he is non-existent, the sense is neither true no false but has no truth value. Strawson (1950) cited in Qualif (2017) brings in the notion of

common ground when he asserts that the impression that the individual exists is a background assumption against which the assertion makes sense.

Some decades ago, PSP had a visible shift in focus from the semantic level of sentence (logic) to pragmatic level of utterances (discourse), cognitive context of speakers, background of beliefs, assumption and presumptions (Stalnaker 1973). As pragmatics studies the correlation between language and speech context (Richard, 2005), pragmatic PSP focuses on the interactants, common ground shared, as well as, the context of utterance. Pragmatic PSP, thus, is highly contextual. Stalnaker (1974) asserts that pragmatic PSP is what is taken by the interactants to be the common ground in a discursive event. It is pertinent here to establish the divide between semantic and pragmatic PSP. While semantic PSP has its focus on truth valueness of sentences (logic in propositions), pragmatic PSP has its focus on background knowledge and context of utterance as essentials to utterance interpretation.

Deducible from the treatise above is that there is a correlation between PSP and common ground. As PSP is deductive inference from utterances, common ground is all the beliefs and assumptions shared by the interactants which facilitate the deductive inference. For Stalnaker (1973), common ground exists in discourse as background beliefs and assumptions and it facilities PSP, a set of propositions that interactants mutually believe and accept as true and take for granted.

There seems to be concepts begging for clarifications here. Such concepts include explication, entailment, PSP and implication Halaman (2018) draws a distinction between PSP and entailment. For him, PSP is what a speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance while entailment is what logically follows from what is uttered. PSP is to interactants while entailment is to sentences. This illustration is given to explicate this point.

A. Proposition: Jane's brother bought two apartments
B. An apartment was bought – Entailment
C. Jane exists –PSP.1

D. Jane has a brother -PSP2.

E. Jane's brother has a lot of money- PSP3.

F. Jane's brother did not buy any apartment- Negation.

In this illustration, sentence A is a proposition which doubles as the explication (what was said or uttered). B is an entailment which follows logically from the explication. C-E are PSPs, what is common knowledge and thus taken for granted and not explication while F is a negation of the proposition. The negation (F) cancels off/ makes the entailment (B) false but sustains all PSPs. Thus, negation is used as some sort of determinant test to draw the distinction between entailment and PSP. Domaneschi (2016), on this divide, uses three sentences as illustration.

A. I have given up smoking – Explicature.

B. I used to smoke – PSP.

C. I have done something useful for myself – Implicature.

From this illustration, one could say that both PSP and implicature are inferences but implicature is a deeper level inference. Penco and Domaneschi (2013) view implicatures as deeper and compelling as the speaker of "I have given up smoking" could be implying that a listener who smokes ought to quit also. For some authors like Karttunen and Peters (1979), there is no distinction between PSP and implicature. To them, conversational implicature doubles as counterfactual PSP and meanings are of two kinds: Extensive expression (explicature) and implicature expression, (PSP)- what is conversationally implied. Since the line between PSP and implicature seen to have dissolved, the research will treat them as one for they are both inferences.

PSP is also linked closely to relevance. For Wilson and Sperber (1979), all deductions from a proposition are ordered according to their prominence and this ordering helps in the establishment of the relevance the speaker intends and greatly facilitates processing and sentence interpretation. The concept of relevance will receive explication under theoretical framework but the researcher wants to point out that

the relevance an utterance embodies, which arises from background knowledge, will make for ease of processing and inference.

There are types of PSP which Yule (1996:27) has isolated. They include:

- Existential - assumption of the existence of entities named.
- Factive- assumption that something is true due to the presence of some verbs (knows, realize, glad).
- Lexical – assumption that in using one word, another meaning will be understood.
- Structural – assumption associated with the use of certain words or phrases – WH words presuppose that the information sought after the "wh" word is already known.
- Non-factive –assumption that something is not true denoted by verbs like dream, imagine, pretend.
- Counterfactual – what is presupposed is not true – counterfactual conditionals presuppose that the information in the "if clause" is not true. "If you were my daughter, I would not let you go".

Researchers have also identified what is known as information triggers. Beaver and Gernts (2014) identify them as expressions carrying PSP while Qualif (2017) sees them as lexical items which help us spot the source of PSP. They include

- Factive verbs – know, manage
- Aspectual verbs – stop, continue
- Temporal clauses headed by before, after, since
- Manner adverbs – Quickly
- Cleft sentences
- Quantifiers
- Definite descriptions
- Names.

This paper, though not a fully detailed gloss on the concept of PSP, has made this review because of its pragmatic import as it constitutes meaning, distinct but deducible from the semantic content of an utterance placed in an appropriate context.

Theoretical Framework

This study has adopted three theories.

The first is the Common Ground Theory as propounded by Herbert Clark and Susan Brennan in 1991. This theory refers to the mutual knowledge, mutual beliefs and assumptions that are believed to be essential ingredients for successful communication between people. In discursive acts, there are assumptions about the information that is known and mutually accepted as belief by participants. These sets of assumptions double as their common ground and function to make discourse efficient and successful. This theory views communication as a form of collaborative action where participants come up with common grounds where they apply the knowledge mutual to them in the production and interpretation of discourse. Stalnaker (2014) notes that, common ground explores the situation in which speech takes place. He goes further to say that common ground is contextual and includes all background information presumed to be shared by speech participants, which significantly functions in their ability to interpret what has been said. . It is believed that interactants' common ground arises due to factors like information that is culturally co-present (immediate surrounding) and those that are linguistically co-present (information exchanged in discourse), (Clark & Marshal, 1981). Allan (nd) asserts that language understanding is a constructive process that involves a lot of interacting which happens or is facilitated by contextual common ground shared by participants, where they draw from what is culturally and physically co-present. Brown-Schmidt and Duff (2016), explicating common ground posit that it is the information that is relevant and mutually known by interactants that the footing, upon which the decision to proceed with a conversation, is established. The authors conclude that in political election, the major candidates are considered common ground.

In discourse, common ground serves to generate context which aids comprehension. This is the case when physical and linguistic co-presence of certain information necessitate and facilitate production, processing and comprehension of discursive acts. Common ground is not static but exploited in

conversation to build more grounds which equally become physical and linguistic co-present (Brown – Schmidt, 2012). The study has adopted this theory as it will help in the understanding of texts and their analysis.

Relevance Theory is another framework that is vital to the thought process of this paper. Relevance theory, henceforth RT, was propounded by cognitive scientists Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson in 1986 and was revised in 1995. Sperber and Wilson (1986) assert that RT draws on the notion that communication processes, aside from encoding, transferring and decoding of message, involves other elements like inference and context and, these, they have termed principles of relevance. RT stipulates that discourse interpretation involves the workings of explicit context, contextual beliefs and assumptions, attitudes and implications. In discursive acts, speakers accord relevance to utterances which function with speaker intention to enhance the process of utterance comprehension. RT is a framework for the study of cognition. Allot (nd) asserts that utterance interpretation relies highly on hearer's ability to infer communicative and informative intentions. For RT, the focal points are both explication and implication because the relevance of an explication greatly makes for its implication. RT captures the length of effect pragmatic inference has on the proposition of an utterance. (Sperber and Wilson, 1986b). RT highly correlates with cognition and utterance interpretation in communication, where it functions as a decoding guide. According to Allot (nd), cognition deals with mental representation which is a facility in deductive inference from what is uttered to arrive at speaker intended meaning.

At the core of RT is speaker intention categorized into communicative and informative intentions which constitute a speaker's ostensive inferential communication. To Wilson and Sperber (2004:611), the informative intention is the intent to inform the hearer of something while the communicative intention is the intent to inform the hearer about the speaker's informative intention. A speaker's utterances function to make the hearer represent and process an issue mentally to arrive at a response born out of a given conclusion. It is the language stimulus given by the speaker that the hearer processes to arrive at an inference.

For relevance theorists, there is a communication principle of relevance and there is a presumed optimal relevance which duty is to initiate a procedure for utterance interpretation, comprehension and cognition. Wilson (2007:394) lends weight to this belief in his postulation that the human cognitive system has developed mental mechanisms which tend to allot attention to and process inputs with the greatest relevance, relevance being a property of inputs in the cognitive scale. This indicates that the more relevance an input has. the more cognitive effect it yields.

This treatise necessitates the explication of cognitive effect and processing effort of RT. Wilson (2009:394) sees processing effort as that shot at processing an input to get to its cognitive effects, perception and inference. What this portrays is that, different language stimuli require different processing efforts. This Allot (nd), citing Wilson and Speber (2004:609), refers to as the measurability of relevance anchored on the assumption that, the greater the positive cognitive effect the processing of an utterance yields, the greater relevance it has and, the greater the processing efforts expended, the lower the relevance of the utterance to an individual. As explicated, there is the tendency of the human cognitive system to seek to process only inputs that are easy and have cognitive valuabilty. Such inputs facilitate inferential interaction with propositions in a bid to arrive at new conclusions. Hantidou (2000) opines that a discourse act is adjudged relevant depending on the cognitive effects and processing efforts it possesses. He notes that relevance is measured by cognitive effects as a communication act with high cognitive effect is considered highly relevant. In like manner, an act that involves high mental effort in its interpretation is considered to be less relevant. The foregoing typifies that the relevance of an utterance occurs when the cognitive effects are quite large while the processing efforts to achieve these effects are reasonably low.

RT has also isolated cognitive environment which doubles as sources of information and they include utterances, books, video and their likes that require processing efforts. At the core of RT's postulation is that context plays a major role in the processing of an utterance to arrive at inference. Wilson and Sperber (2004:609) heighten this belief in their assertion that implications inferred from an utterance are dependent on context and, to a greater degree, on shared knowledge between interactants.

Manifestness in another concept in RT which this paper explicates. A proposition is manifest to an individual if that individual could represent it mentally. An individual perceives, processes and draws inference from manifest assumptions. The researcher has noticed and wishes to point out that both relevance and manifestness have no clear cut distinction. In Allot's (nd) interpretation, relevance is to a proposition while manifestness it to inferences. As this distinction is a little bit hazy, the concepts are not treated as being discreet in this paper. The researcher has given these explications given their appearance in data analysis.

Another theory that this study hinges on is Political Discourse Analysis, otherwise called critical discourse analysis. Simply put, discourse analysis dwells on the dissection of linguistic strings. Cook (1989:6) notes that discourse analysis examines how structures of language examined in their textual and social contexts become meaningful. DA in its engagements incorporates the purposes and functions of linguistic forms in human interaction. Alba-Jeuz (2009) explicates that DA gives importance to the external factors that act on an utterance. As DA does all these, PDA applies all tenets of DA in the exploration of political discourse. Fairclough (1995) posits that PDA applies critical approach in dealing with discursive acts and conditions consequent on political and social inequality. Van Dijk (1997) opines that PDA while looking at dominance and power abuse in the political sphere also explores the forms of resistance against such dominance. Thus, linguistic items in PDA either heighten or de-emphasize political actions and opinions. Dunmire (2012) asserts that language plays a significant role in the struggle over power. It is used in context to identify social problems like power abuse and, by extension, initiate strategies for solving such problems. This gives credence to the importance of context and inference in meaning construction. This study has decided to adopt PDA as a working framework because it will help extract the linguistic features in the data like the concepts presupposition and relevance that will appear in the analysis. The three theories chosen will help elucidate the thought process of the paper.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive, analytical method to extract linguistic information from the selected data. In all, six stretches of discourse were analyzed. Three were audio and visuals while the rest were posts gotten from an Imo Online Forum. These were posts made between September 2017 and April 2019 in reaction to topical issues in the state, the audios were transcribed and analyzed. The data were analyzed qualitatively in accordance with their relevance to the objective, research question as well as the theories adapted. The data were analyzed using discourse analysis and pragmatics approaches.

Data Analysis

The data were grouped into two: the pre election and the post election categories.

a. **PRE- ELECTION DATA**

Datum 1: Audio-Visual: Music

TRANSCRIPTION.

Okoro Awusa has done great evil

Is there any Agu Ukwu Nri man here?

Let him come with Oji ugo – (special kola nut)

Uriom Okuku (Chicks) and aziza (broom)

Let us go to Imo and appease the land

The desecration of the land by Okoro awusa is

Of high magnitude, Evil is literarily sprouting (Opuwa Ome)

Okoro Awusa has done great Evil

He gave house members 3 million each to impeach his deputy

How money is being eaten by a few

While others are dying of hunger

There was a time he wanted to sign abortion law

That would have engineered promiscuity

But God almighty did not allow it.

Let us use his style of greeting

He would always say, my people my people

And Owerri people will say, our governor, our governor

He campaigned under APGA in his first tenure

He was always walking like the angels

Angel Michael Okoro

Imo people were jubilating, jumping in elation ad shouting

Our Messiah has come! Our messiah has come!!

He was giving out motorcycles, tricycles and even Kerosene

Good Samaritan Okoro

Let us recount his good works in Imo for a worker deserves his wages

He owes pensioners 4 years wages

All civil servants in Imo receive half salary

He sacked not less than 1,000 workers.

A worker deserves his wages

His road constructions are below standard (China Road)

He asked traditional rulers to contribute money

Those who did not were robbed of their staff of office

He runs government as family business

Sister, brother, in-law and even dogs are in government positions

My message to Imolites

If you statue has not been erected

Get it done before Okoro awusa leaves

If not, a great thing has happened to you

I did not say anything oh!

(Note that that this music discourse was produced by blind men)

Analysis

This datum tried to answer the research questions: Does the political discourse mean more than it explicates and how inferential is political discourse?

Table	Extraction of Linguistic Interaction
Proposition	Datum 1 is a general proposition that the government of the day is charting a wrong course: running family government, slashing of workers' salaries, owing pensioners.
Explicature	The text explicates that: there is corruption. Money is being wasted - 3 million to each house member for an unjust cause. Erection of statues that do not add value to the masses and the state, cutting of worker's salaries, sub standard constructions and their likes.
Inference:Presupposition/ Implicature	Inferences are that there are group interests. The governor has his interests. The governor has his interests that are not at par with those of the masses, thus, it has continued to receive negative attitude. This text presupposes that the governance is bad and there needs to be a change. It implies that actions should be galvanized to oust the government of the day. A worker deserves his wage implies that the governor should be paid back in his own coin.
Common ground	It is a shared knowledge that the government is anti masses and that the funfair that heralded its coming to power was a wasted venture.
Context	This text is located in the context where it takes a corrective stance.
Internationality	This text functions to provoke negative attitude towards the government of the day by stating its irony of good deeds.

Relevance/Manifestness/ Cognitive Effect	This text is relevant given the low mental effort needed in its processing. It is a fact in Imo State that the government of the day has failed in its policies. This text is manifest to Imolites because, what is contained therein is a true representation of what is contextually and physical present in the society. Government is run as family business. Sister is commissioner for happiness; son-in-law was commissioner and now governorship aspirant. This text has high cognitive effect and relevance because it represents the world people in the state know.
Definite Description	This text makes reference to the Igbo cosmology. The following expressions aptly do this. "Is there any Agu Nri man here? Let him come with Ugo kola nut, little chicks and broom, let us appease the land". These expressions point to the place of Nri people in igbo cosmology. They are believed to be the first to settle in the land Aguleri (representing Igbo land) so it is their duty to keep the land sacred. Whenever there is a desecration of some sort, they are called upon to appease the land and whatever Eze Nri says is binding on all Igbos.

Datum 2: Audio

Transcription

	Officer Hold him, do not let him run! He should go to jail Let us know what he has looted and what is left
Music	We did business with him and during time for account, He wants to run He is holding salaries of workers and wages of pensioners He has dealt with us.
Voice	My people, how far!

Sometime ago, I said this man should go

And I was criticized. So what has happened?

He and his in-law have looted the state treasury.

He said job, job, job!

 But put us in the condition of Job Job Job!

Call all who have been marginalized

Pensioners, youth must work, contractors

He destroyed people's shops, confiscated people's land

He has swallowed the treasury!

He has taken local government workers salaries

Pensioners are dying!

How can someone whose mouth smells whisper to people

All he did to us does not touch him.

He wants to put us in perpetual poverty

He wants to put his son-in-law in his stead

Even if we are goats, we are not his goat!

Have you not heard that the Bible said

"Let my people go"

Music   It is already 8 years. I am going for I have finished my tenure

What I left undone, my boy will do

All evil I did not do, my boy will do it

The people whose statue I did not erect, my boy will do it

The things I did not loot, my boy will do it

| Voice | But Oga, know that there is reward for labour, |
	May God, May God pay you according to your deeds.
	May God treat you as you treated those who voted for
	and protected your vote .Ex 20:5
Music	My boy is coming. I will stay by the side and administer my third tenure

Analysis

This datum is hinged on the objective; to investigate the semantic and pragmatic import of political discourse. It also tried to answer the research question; does political discourse mean more than it explicates and how evident is presupposition in political discourse?

Proposition	Datum 2 is a proposition that the action of the state governor in trying to have his son-in-law replace him is highly not acceptable to the masses.
Interference: Presupposition/Implicature	There is disenchantment in the language of the masses and this manifests in their negative attitude towards the powers that be. This text presupposes that the masses are disenchanted with the state of affairs. The text implies that though the citizens want him out, he should be made to give account of his stewardship and face the music.
Shared mutual knowledge	There is injustice, looting, incompetence, marginalization in the land. Evidential sentences; "He is sowing workers and pensioners their salaries. He destroyed people's shops, confiscated peoples land. He has swallowed the treasury".
Contextual features	The context of this text is a call to action to correct the ugly trend of things through people's voting.
Intentionality	To awaken the people to the consciousness that their collective efforts and voices can save them from their present predicament. "My people it is time, be careful not to fall prey to the same people".

Relevance, Manifestness and Cognitive Effect	The text is relevant. In the state, it is a known fact that the governor grabs lands, erects statues indiscriminately, owes workers, stopped the youth must work, an employment scheme initiated by his predecessor, installed his sister as the commissioner for his newly created ministry of happiness and purpose fulfillment and so on. Also these give the text its manifestness and cognitive effect.
Definite Description	The Bible Said "Let my people go" there is reward for labour. God will pay you according to your deeds, reference to the condition of job.

Datum 3: Text

NWANNE, AKPUOLA GI ?
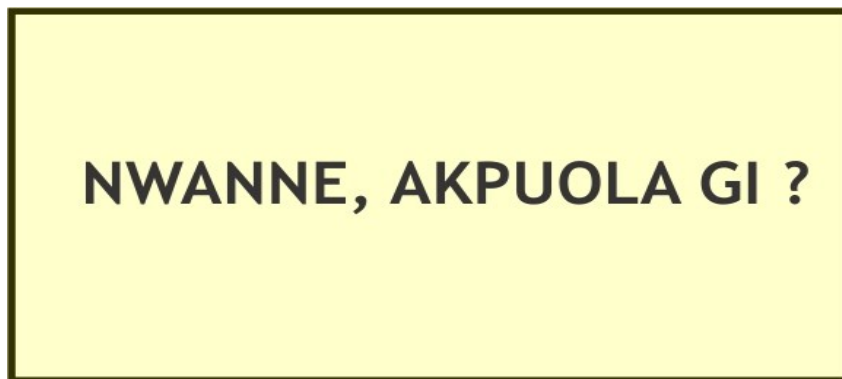
Transcription: My brother, has your statue been erected? (Have you been molded?)

Analysis

This datum tries to answer the research question: does political discourse mean more than it explicates.

Proposition	There is the possibility of one's statue being erected.
	.
Presupposition/Implicature	It implies that statue erection is the business of the day in the state and that the masses are not happy. it is the common ground shared by the people that will make them understand that the text is not a mere question but a kind of criticism.
Common Ground	It is the shared mutual knowledge the people hold that gives this text not

	only an interrogative import but also a satirical import.
Relevance	It is relevant given the erection of statue as the priority of the government of the day. Thus, it requires low mental effort and has high cognitive effect.

Datum 4: Text

Transcription: One whose duty is to erect statues, please erect my own statue!

ANALYSIS

This datum tries to answer the research question, does political discourse mean more than it explicates?

Proposition	There is an indiscriminating erection of statues, so mine should be erected.
Presupposition/Implicature	Text presupposes that there is one who erects statues and that anybody's statue can be erected. Statue erection is a priority to the government of the day.
Common ground	Mutual knowledge that this is not a plea but a subtle sarcasm
Relevance	Text is generally understood, so it has low mental processing and high cognitive effect as it is manifest to the entire citizens of the state.

Post Election Data

DATA 5: TEXT

These texts try to answer the research questions: does political discourse say mean than it explicates? It is also hinged on the objective: to isolate the types of meaning in political discourse.

Analysis

Proposition/Explicature	The text proposes that the son-in-law succeeding his father-in-law agenda has been cancelled by the people's mandate. There used to be iberiberism which term the governor used to refer to oppositions and the people use it to refer to all their disenchantments.
Inference/Presupposition/ Implicature	. It can be inferred that the masses are expectant of a brighter future and that they have used their powers well as politicians are not the sole arbiters of power. The "nna na ogo" mantra has been dismantled. The text presupposes that the people have been freed from the shackles of bondage, oppression and marginalization. The text implies that the battle is fought and won and evil has been unseated.
Contextual feature	There is context of satisfaction evidence is the thanks given to God for freedom.

| Relevance | .
There is general understanding of text. This accounts for its relevance. |
|---|---|

Datum 6: Video And Text

Transcription:

I was in my house, when they called me that Rochas has lost
Why will he not lose since the only thing he knows is how
to erect statues. See all the statues he erected and he is still
erecting more. Even people with low integrity find their statues erected. He has
lost now. He should come down from that seat and take one sit where every
other person sits.

(Note that the video was shot in a mini stadium where the statues are lined up).

Analysis

Proposition	The elections did not go in favour of the governor who wanted to put his son-in-law in power by all means.
Inference:Presupposition/Implicature	It can be inferred that the masses are eager to see that he goes and cannot wait for the handover day after which he would be treated with disdain The text presupposes that the speaker loves the outcome of the elections and cannot hide her

	feelings The text implies that the governor has lost his glory as he is now like every other man as is evidence in the assertion that he should take one seat in the common stadium
	.
Relevance	The video and accompanying texts are relevant given that it is a mutual knowledge physically co-present that the governor derives joy in erecting statues while neglecting the welfare of the masses.

Findings

The analysis of data revealed that political discourse, the end it flows from notwithstanding, is highly potent. It is constructed for specific effects and must achieve those effects. It has also been revealed that political discourse provides rich data for linguistics analysis. Certain presuppositions were identified from the texts analyzed. They include:

Existential PSP–Datum 1. Proposition 1: Okoro awusa has done evil.

                  PSP.   There is someone called okoro awusa.

                  Proposition 2. Let us go to Imo and appease the gods.

                  PSP: A place called Imo exits.

          Datum 2.   Proposition 1: Pensioners are dying.

                  PSP: Pensioners exist.

          Datum 6. Proposition: I was n my house when they called me that Rochas has

                              gone.

                  PSP: An entity called Rochas exists.

Factive PSP-   Datum 1.   Proposition: His road constructions are bad

                    PSP: The verb "are" indicates a state, thus, the PSP "there are road

              constructions'.

          Datum 2. Proposition: But 'oga', know that there is reward for labour.

                PSP: Someone has laboured.

Lexical PSP-Datum 1.   Proposition: He sacked not less than 1,000 workers.

                PSP: There were workers.

          Datum 2. Proposition: Do not let him go.

             PSP: He wants to go.

Structural PSP- Datum 2. Proposition: Let us know what has been looted and what is left.

             PSP: Somebody did a looting.

The researcher also found out that the counter discourse of the masses were instrumental to the dismantling of misrule evident in the loss of the governor's son in-law at the polls as there were presuppositions of the governor's continued rule had his son in-law won.. It was also revealed that some

of the data, 3 and 4 precisely, lost their imperative and interrogative imports, and in the common ground shared by Imolites, acquired rather a sarcastic import.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The whole essence of the study has been an effort to explore political discourse particularly the ones that emanated before and immediately after the 2019 general elections in Imo state. It has been established that political discourse is laden with the potency to achieve its goal depending on the originator and his intention or purpose. To this effect, political discourse, like the ones analyzed, could be corrective in nature. The paper established that a leadership that is so insensitive that it pushes its citizenry beyond their limit of endurance suffers greatly, because the people would fight back at least with language. As political actors do not have power as their prerogative, the masses can wield their own power whenever the need arises so as to fashion out effective leadership roles for the survival of the society. The study x-rayed the inherent linguistic features of political discourse stating that such discourse reflects and achieves more than is explicitly stated. It is against this backdrop that the following recommendations were made.

- Political actors should understand that politics is a call to service and so should be accountable in their dealings.
- The masses that are faced with bad governance should use the power of their collective voices to chart a new course for themselves.
- Language is a powerful weapon that can shoot even more than the mask man's bullet so it should be employed when the need arises to fight wars guns cannot fight.

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