

GLITTERING GENERALITIES AND VALIDATION OR INVALIDATION BY AUDIENCES: AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SPEECHES OF NYESOM WIKE, ROTIMI AMAECHI AND BOLA TINUBU

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Abstract

The study thrust was anchored on the need to provide a scientific explanation of the application of glittering generalities as identified in the political narratives of select Nigerian politician's speeches. The objectives among others bordered on the need to investigate the glittering generalities antics employed by politicians under review in their political communication. Above all, the study affirms that the scientific application of glittering generalities as identified in the political narratives of select Nigerian politician's speeches is explainable using Rhetoric Theory and Public Sphere Theory. A mixed methods research design was adopted, combining discourse analysis of the speeches of the 3 selected politicians transcribed from 3 online media platforms with 3 speeches per politician and survey of their audiences through a Focus Group Discussion of 6 participants each from the city of Port Harcourt and Benin. The study gathered all of its data for discourse analysis using documentary analysis guide. While focus group guide was used to gather data from the participants from Port Harcourt and Benin metropolis during the focus group discussions. The study found that politicians under study deployed glittering generality antics in their speeches. The finding showed that politicians in using these techniques do not only seek to control the people's opinion or make them change their views, but also, the ultimate goal is to win elections and control the nation. Furthermore, data from the speeches examined showed that the different politicians used glittering generality techniques severally and differently. In all the speeches where glittering generalities were used, it was calculatedly for the persuasion of their audiences, and for making statements to portray or validates them before the right-thinking public. In the light of the findings, the study recommended that politicians should stop making statements without substance; rhetorical antics should be used more for public good and the enrichment of our polity rather than for manipulation; political actors should be more conscientious with the use of glittering generality technique, meaning that, rather than using glittering generality rhetoric to sway the citizens to subscribe to vain causes, glittering generality antics should be used to mobilize the citizens to causes of our common good and development.

Key Words: Glittering Generalities, Validation, Speeches and Audience.

Introduction

Political speeches are often made with the intention to persuade audience to shift their grounds towards the speech maker point of view. Many times, these speeches are laced with words that one cannot make sense or meaning from it. The avalanche of such speeches and antics are daily featuring on our various news channels and other political campaign events. These perceived vague speeches seem to be dominating our political discourse thereby connecting with the audience beliefs and value. Audience sometimes tends to flow in the direction of the speech maker even when the statements do not say anything substantive. Example of unsubstantiated words with vague expression in political narrative is glittering generalities.

Glittering generalities according to Mohd (2010) "was one of the seven main propaganda techniques identified by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis in 1938." It also takes place frequently in politics and political propaganda. Richard (2019) asserts that "a glittering generality is a vague word or phrase that is used to evoke positive feelings rather than to convey information." These terms are

also known as glowing generalities, empty vessels, virtue words, or loaded words (or loaded phrases) (p.3).

Political language has a number of functions which are reflected in the speech itself. Political language disguises, transforms and deepens a particular phenomenon, and it is mainly used to convince receivers with the speaker's point of view by using techniques such as explanation and analysis (Wala, 2015). Seidel (1985) cited in Wala (2015) points out that "a political speech may constitute a genre, a domain, or a field." Moreover, it is an incredible achievement at a particular time and at a particular place, and it has three major elements; the addressor (the speaker who produces the speech), the addressee (the hearer who is the recipient of the speech), and the political speech itself" (p. 1).

It is in view of the foregoing this study seeks to analyze the discourses in the speeches and antics of select Nigerian politicians with a view to teasing out the consequence of glittering generalities in prevailing political narratives amidst other intervening variables.

Statement of the Problem

The speech that persuades a voter to favour one candidate instead of the other is a craft. Such a craft is vital to how any politician is accessed. If the speech of a politician is incisive, it draws attention to the speech maker. The concern therefore borders on how much of attention politicians give to their speeches and antics.

The problem of exhuming a politician's true intentions from his speech is often a challenging task. It usually would require analytical tools deployed to his speeches in order to successfully discern his antics therein. This work sets out to perform such analysis on the speeches of select Nigerian politicians. The specific antics to be unearthed are those that concern or border on glittering generalities. This is the problem that this work sets out to unravel.

Objectives of the Study

The study's broad objectives was to provide a scientific explanation of the application of glittering generalities within the context of the speeches of select Nigerian politicians. The specific objectives derived from the broad objective were to:

1. To investigate the glittering generalities antics employed by the politicians under review in their political communication.
2. Evaluate the degree of dexterity and proficiency of the politicians under review in their application of the elements of glittering generalities in their rhetoric.
3. Analyse if a culmination of these elements in the speeches of the politicians under study result in persuasion of their audiences.

Theoretical Underpinning

In view of this, this study is anchored on two theories, namely: Rhetoric Theory and Public Sphere Theory.

Rhetoric Theory

In his treatise on Rhetoric (360 BC – 334 BC), Aristotle defined Rhetoric as an act of observing systematically, the available means of persuasion in any given case (Madhaviatha & Madhumita, 2016). To theorize about rhetoric implies a particular attitude, which Aristotle first formalized and bequeathed to later commentators on the art of discourse (Mitchelle, 1990). It is clear, then, that rhetorical study, in its strict sense, is concerned with the modes of persuasion. Persuasion is clearly a sort of demonstration, since we are most fully persuaded when we consider a thing to have been demonstrated (Roberts, 1998).

Simonson (2020), argued that:

The meaning of rhetorical theory is located in the sign itself, historically contextualized uses of it, and potentialities for further meaning that can be

realized through performative engagement with it. Rhetorical theory gains meanings as people think and discourse with the sign, incorporate it into social practices of inquiry, and give it material form through nodes of expression—for example, bodies, physical and social spaces, print and other forms of writing, curricula, academic journals, and professional associations (p.5).

Roberts (1998), opines that rhetoric may be viewed as the faculty of observation in any given case the available means of persuasion. Furthermore, Roberts (1998), states that this is not a function of any art. "Every other art can instruct, or persuade about its own particular subject-matter; for instance, medicine about what is healthy and unhealthy, geometry about the properties of magnitudes, arithmetic about numbers, and the same is true of the other arts and sciences."

Roberts (1998), in his deliberations of the subject matter states...

But rhetoric we look upon as the power of observing the means of persuasion on almost any subject presented to us; and that is why we say that, in its technical character, it is not concerned with any special or definite class of subjects.

Of the modes of persuasion some belong strictly to the art of rhetoric and some do not. By the latter I mean such things as are not supplied by the speaker but are there at the outset-witnesses, evidence given under torture, written contracts, and so on. By the former I mean such as we can ourselves construct by means of the principles of rhetoric. The one kind has merely to be used, the other has to be invented (p.8).

Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds (Roberts, 1998). The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself (Roberts, 1998). Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible. We believe good men more fully and more readily than others: this is true generally whatever the question is, and absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible and opinions are divided (p.9). This kind of persuasion, like the others, should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak.

Public Sphere Theory

Public Sphere Theory was propounded by Jurgen Habermas in 1962. The popularity of the term (public sphere theory) in English speaking world in the past decades is primarily indebted to the translation of Jurgen Habermas influential work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Stephen and Karen 2009). Its original German term "Öffentlichkeit" can be translated into more familiar ideas such as publicity, the public, publicness, and openness (p.814).

According to Habermas, inquiries about the notion should not be limited to the historically specific bourgeois space implied by the English term. In fact, the notion of public sphere runs deeply through the history of Western political philosophy, and the way in which the public-private distinction is drawn and reformulated have always been one of the key prisms through which diverse spectrums of political philosophy diverge (Stephen, et al. 2009).

Furthermore, Stephen et al. (2009) states that:

One of the most important contributions of the idea of public sphere to communication theory is its explicit emphasis on the forms and modes of communication as central to political and public life." The public sphere is indispensable in understanding the political commitment and the moral vision of communication theory. Again, the concept is central to the study of public

discourse, media, political communication, and deliberative democracy (p.814).

The public sphere is an essential element of democratic governance. Democratic governance demands that politics generally takes place publicly and that political institutions are subject to public control (Gerhards & Neidhardt, 1991; Habermas, 1974; Peters, 2007; Wessler et al., 2008 cited in Walter, 2016). Furthermore, Jurgen (1989) cited in Del Valle, Sijtsma, Stegeman and Borge (2020) "described the public sphere as a necessary condition of democracy. In essence, the public sphere housed inclusive and rational political discussions." A well-functioning public sphere gives rise to the expression of a filtered and general public opinion (p.3).

Conceptualizing Glittering Generalities Antics

According to Richard (2019) "glittering generality is a word so vague that everyone agrees on its appropriateness and value—but no one is really sure just what it means." When your instructor says she is in favor of 'fair grading policies' or 'flexibility in the submission of assignments,' you may think, 'Hey, she's not so bad after all.' Later, however, you may discover that your interpretation of these terms is quite different from what she intended (p.3).

Glittering generalities are seen to be adopted as part of political language. Everyone seem to be making used of vague phrases so frequently that it has assumed a natural part of our political discourse. In an age of perceived information overload, glittering generalities can make or mar a candidate's campaign. For example, words like "I stand for freedom: for a strong nation, unrivaled in the world. My opponent believes we must compromise on these ideals, but I believe they are our birthright" are dominating our political speeches (Richard, 2019).

Mohd (2010) affirms that: psychologically, no one could escape from his personal bias that he accumulates through his own experience. If a man encounters something such as an event or a person or a situation, he might associate with his experience even though what he encounters is something new to him. This unconscious projection termed by general semantics is something natural to human beings; since intrapersonal communication is part of human communication process, no one could run away from talking based on his experience that eventually develop his perception towards things, events or persons whom he encounters. Knowing the weaknesses of the target audience, propagandists will ingeniously craft the words of predetermine end that is congruent with the frame of thoughts of the propagandist (p.10).

Mohd (2010) further states that "glittering generalities are words that have different positive meaning for individual subjects, but are linked to highly valued concepts." When words of glittering generalities are used, they demand approval without thinking, simply because such an important concept is involved (p.11). For example, when a person is asked to do something in "defense of democracy" they are more likely to agree. According to Mohd (2010) the concept of democracy has a positive connotation to them because it is linked to a concept that they value. Words often used as glittering generalities are honor, glory, love of country, and especially in the United States, freedom. When coming across with glittering generalities, we should especially consider the merits of the idea itself when separated from specific words (p.11).

The application of glittering generalities as a propaganda technique actually allows you to sway your audience, without giving them a concrete reason. It involves your oratory skills. Using of words like freedom, integrity, etc in your political speeches can endear you the audience without their knowing that they are being used for political gains of the speaker. According to Marketing 101 (nd) Glittering generality is, in short, name calling in reverse. While name calling seeks to make us form a judgment

to reject and condemn without examining the evidence, the glittering generality device seeks to make us approve and accept without examining the evidence.”

Political Communication and Campaigns

Political communication comprises all forms of verbal and non-verbal gestures geared towards persuading electorates and the public towards considering them as the best option in an election. Furthermore, political communication is the discourse among political groups (political parties), political players (elected officials), the media, and the electorates with a view to advancing one's ideas and opinion. Political communication is an interdisciplinary field that cut across the social sciences, strategic communication, and media studies with politics and government. Political communication techniques and strategies allow policy advocates, public relations officers, speechwriters, campaign executives, political consultants, political marketers, elected officials, and other political professionals to create, shape, and distribute messages that can influence the political process (MasterinCommunication.com, 2017).

Again, political communication no doubt is at the centre of the sole of every political engagement of any nation be it democratic or not hence the indispensability role it holds. It carves political image of a political party, civil society organization and the government.

Hosamani, Vadiraj and Anand (2014) states:

With every event that unfolds, a positive development, a crisis or a scandal, a major achievement of the political party/government/ politician, there is a new opportunity to shape a political party's image and it all depends on how a political party communicates to different stakeholders and what tools/medium you choose to communicate, because the medium is the message. Election in any democratic nation is one of the largest national events and during this phase political parties use political communication to the maximum to achieve a favorable electoral verdict (p.4).

Politicians use visual resources such as vests, head wears, dance and arrogate language among others to communicate meanings in the discourse with the central theme of seeking political support for certain politicians or political parties (Ademilokun & Olateju, 2016 cited in Okpowhor, Okon & Nsereka, 2020). Agudosi (2007) cited in Okoro and Santas (2017) defines political communication as the dissemination of information about the functioning of a political entity in order to influence the behaviour of the audience in a variety of ways. It is also the interactive process concerning transmission of information among politicians, the news media and the public (Agulosi, 2007, cited in Okoro & Santas, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed methods research design, combining discourse analysis of the speeches of the selected politicians and survey of their audiences. The population of the study consists of the speeches of the three politicians available on the Internet on the one hand, and on the other hand, the registered voters in Port Harcourt metropolis and Benin metropolis.

The number of speeches per selected politician was: The number of speeches of the three political figures as published on the various selected media between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2022 is 9 in total. A breakdown of the speeches per selected politicians is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Breakdown of the number of speeches per select politician

Select Politicians	Channels YouTube	Arise News YouTube	TVC News YouTube	Total
Nyesom Wike	1	0	2	3
Rotimi Amaechi	2	1	0	3
Bola Tinubu	1	2	0	3

Total	4	3	2	9
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On the one hand, the sample size for the speeches was a census of all the 9 speeches in the purview of the study. On the other hand, since the nature of this study necessitates Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the sample size for the FGD was determined by the demographics that yielded the greatest resources with respect to the subject matter. To this end, a sample size of 12 participants, 6 per Focus Group, was adopted. The 9 speeches comprised 3 speeches per selected politician, while the 6 participants for each of the 2 focus groups were evenly drawn from the local government areas that make up each of the metropolises. Purposive sampling technique was used to select both the sample of speeches and the sample of focus group participants. This study gathered all of its data from speeches and antics of select politicians available on the Internet and a Focus Group Discussion from residence of Port Harcourt and Benin metropolis, hence the adoption of discourse analysis design method.

Data Presentation and Analysis

At this stage the data collected in the study is presented, analyzed and discussed. On the one hand, this data is contained in the sample of 9 speeches – three per politician – transcribed from the three media platforms examined in the study, and on the other hand, the responses from the two Focus Group Discussion sessions of 6 participants per session, conducted in Port Harcourt and Benin metropolis.

The Techniques of Glittering Generalities as Used by Nyesom Wike

The following are excerpts from the said post with regards to narratives of glittering generalities.

"Leadership is not about party leadership, is not about eh...party. Leadership is about individual. Party is only a vehicle to actualize your ambition. To be able to tell your people I have this capacity, I have this quality to render services to you."

-Excerpt from Wike speech posted on TVC News YouTube Channel transcribed verbatim

"There is no state as we speak today that can say they're still flagging off projects there's no one state, not one, not one."

"The campaign has been done for you. All you are just doing let it not be that I don't respect people let me still go out and talk to them. River's people know you that we have done it."

-Excerpt from Wike speech posted on TVC News YouTube Channel transcribed verbatim

"All those days when you see oh Wike is fighting, Wike is fighting, there's nothing personal about it but for the interest of the party and I have said all those fights is no longer necessary. I won't continue to fight all these fight that people will not appreciate."

-Excerpt from Wike speech posted on Channels Television YouTube Channel transcribed **The Techniques of Glittering Generalities as Used by Rotimi Amaechi**

The following are excerpts from the said post with regards to narratives of glittering generalities.

"What is our source of income; how did we get this money? The problem of the Nigerian State is all of us Nigerian politicians will come here and tell you and talk to you and bring out money. Four years after they will repeat the same thing and we will believe them."

-Excerpt from Amaechi speech posted on Arise News YouTube Channel transcribed

"Those days of rigging, writing results they are all gone. INEC, we must praise INEC; we must praise the National Assembly for reducing the level of rigging where people just sit down at the States capital and write results and INEC will announce. Now it is almost gone."

-Excerpt from Amaechi speech posted on Channels Television YouTube Channel transcribed verbatim

"I do not come from a privileged background. I grew up poor, I understand how it feels to go without some meals in a day. I know the pain of lack and the agony of want. I know what it means to see your parents toil just to keep a roof over your family's head. I know what it is to feel the weight of expectation when you are the only one in your family who enjoys the opportunity to attend university."

-Excerpt from Amaechi speech posted on Channels Television YouTube Channel transcribed verbatim

The Techniques of Glittering Generalities as Used by Bola Tinubu

The following are excerpts from the said post with regards to narratives of glittering generalities.

"Every election, wherever it is held, is important to the people or entity directly concerned. It is also important to the global democracy community as well. Equally, there are also countries whose elections, on account of their weight and influence, carry wider implications way beyond their immediate geographical boundaries. Nigeria is one of such countries."

-Excerpt from Tinubu speech posted on Channels Television YouTube Channel transcribed verbatim

"It doesn't take away from thanking you for the cooperation, collaboration and co-headedness to build our country."

"To my brother, Femi Gbajabiamila, the sparkling speaker, I credit you for being an ever ready not a battery but a canister charged up ready to do Nigerians work and build the nation that you and your grand-children and the rest of us would be able to live in peace and harmony, thank you very much."

-Excerpt from Tinubu speech posted on Arise News YouTube Channel transcribed verbatim

"We would use this convention to show the world that APC celebrate democracy by faithfully participating in it, so we will freely and fairly nominate the person to follow president Muhammadu Buhari as our next standard bearer, for you delegate, this is your responsibility. I know you will meet this duty with the seriousness it deserves."

-Excerpt from Tinubu speech posted on Arise News YouTube Channel transcribed verbatim

From the excerpt of the speeches of the politicians examined for this work, Nyesom Wike, Rotimi Amaechi and Bola Tinubu played up glittering generalities antics in the speeches used for this study.

Focus Group Data Presentation and Analysis

This section is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data of the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) held in the two different cities of Port Harcourt and Benin. This was carried out to ascertain whether or not the speeches of the politicians under study resonate with the audience.

The Focus Group Discussion session with participants in Port Harcourt was held on Thursday, June 8, 2023 at Rumukalagbor Town Hall, Rumukalagbor, Port Harcourt, while the FGD session with participants in Benin City was held on Thursday, July 13, 2023 at Highstar Hotel and Suites, EDPA Estate, Benin City. For each of the FGDs, one moderator and one recorder facilitated the sessions.

How FGD Respondents Identified the Use of the Technique of Glittering Generalities by the Politicians in their Speeches

FGD Guide Item 1: From the speeches that you have just watched/listened to, can you identify any forms of glittering generalities used by the speakers?

Respondent 1 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

It is a manipulative tendency. It is like the art of saying nothing. For instance, it happens in the tenure of governor Wike when he said he was to provide ten thousand jobs and other promises he made that never came through. That could be perceived as glittering generality. It is manipulative.

Respondent 2 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

From Amaechi speech you can see manipulation where he said that the days of writing results to rig elections are over. All these manipulative statements similar to glittering generalities.

Respondent 3 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

Yes, for Tinubu, "Indeed, there is more than a passing interest in Nigerian politics generally and the upcoming elections in particular for several reasons. For one, as Africa's most populous country and the continent's largest economy, it is generally acknowledged that the fortunes of the African continent and indeed the Black race is tied directly to the health of Nigeria." All these manipulative statements akin to glittering generalities.

Respondent 4 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

I can identify from Wike statement "Leadership is not about party leadership, is not about eh...party. Leadership is about individual. From Amaechi "I do not come from a privileged background. I grew up poor, I understand how it feels to go without some meals in a day. I know the pain of lack and the agony of want. From Tinubu "Every election, wherever it is held, is important to the people or entity directly concerned.

Respondent 5 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

Yes, I can. From Wike "I challenge everybody the problem we have in this country today, we don't have people who have the passion. Who want to serve their people. The only regret I have; I don't have the opportunity to tell the bandit enough is enough."

Respondent 6 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

Off course, they appear in almost all the speeches read. Where politicians say things that is not true just to validate their claims. It is usually things without meaning.

Respondent 1 (Benin Metropolis)

Yes, I can. Glittering generalities. Using vague word without actually having any meaning just to validate their stand. It is very evident in their speeches.

Respondent 2 (Benin Metropolis)

Yes, when you make statement like "Every election, wherever it is held, is important to the people or entity directly concerned. It is also important to the global democracy community as well.

Respondent 3 (Benin Metropolis)

I can identify it. The speech of Wike as report by TVC News has forms of glittering generalities. It read thus: "So, I am not bothered about whom you're close to. I know my worth, I know what I can do, I know what I cannot eh... do. I don't claim what I cannot do. If I say I will do this I will do it."

Respondent 4 (Benin Metropolis)

The speech of Amaechi is a perfect of it "those days of rigging, writing results they are all gone.

Respondent 5 (Benin Metropolis)

"I know what it means to see your parents toil just to keep a roof over your family's head. I know what it is to feel the weight of expectation when you are the only one in your family who enjoys the opportunity to attend university."-Amaechi speech as reported by Channels Television.

Respondent 6 (Benin Metropolis)

"In spite of the legitimate concerns being expressed by observers, Nigerians are resolutely committed to democracy, regardless of their political differences." -Tinubu speech as reported by Channels Television.

FGD Guide Item 2: Please elaborate on why you think that the forms that you have identified are forms of glittering generalities?

Respondent 1 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

I think, again, sorry I have to speak about Rivers State even if I have read other speeches but again when you talk about the fact that in one breath you be talking about you are people in terms nationalism and in another breath for instance, you are not tolerant to other region/religion and you now say for instance, Rivers State is Christian State. You know, when ordinarily you don't have all the statistics to support that claim. You, it could be perceived as glittering generality.

Respondent 2 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

Glittering generalities as you know, thrives on manipulation to validate its. That's what their speeches are aimed at. In fact, politicians play on people's emotions through this kind of manipulations.

Respondent 3 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

They are glittering generalities because they are vague and point to nothing tangible.

Respondent 4 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

They are glittering generalities because they say things to validate their claims in a vague manner.

Respondent 5 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

They are because it points to the fact that they vague and says nothing meaningful for the public to hear and understand. The point here is that they want to validate their stands on issues in question.

Respondent 6 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

It is glittering generalities because what they said in most cases cannot be substantiated or supported by any evidence.

Respondent 1 (Benin Metropolis)

The choice words in their speeches have no meaning other than sweet talking the people.

Respondent 2 (Benin Metropolis)

Making statements without substance is an example of glittering generalities. This is politicians say something just for saying sake. Vague assertions without meaning.

Respondent 3 (Benin Metropolis)

The messages have no particular meaning but made to validate his political power over his opponents.

Respondent 4 (Benin Metropolis)

The statement does not state any fact but mere wishful thinking as the election that followed proved it.

Respondent 5 (Benin Metropolis)

The statement was made to validate his candidacy.

Respondent 6 (Benin Metropolis)

The statement is vague.

FGD Guide Item 3: Which particular speech or speeches would you want to single out for its particular effect of glittering generalities?

Respondent 1 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

Speeches from all the select politicians.

Respondent 2 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

Amaechi speech posted on Channels Television YouTube Channel and Tinubu speech posted on Channels Television YouTube Channel.

Respondent 3 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

The speech of Wike and Amaechi during presidential primary election.

Respondent 4 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

Wike, Amaechi and Tinubu speech has a lot of glittering generalities in it.

Respondent 5 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

Speech from Amaechi and Wike featured very well.

Respondent 6 (Port Harcourt Metropolis)

The speech by Wike, Amaechi, Tinubu,

Respondent 1 (Benin Metropolis)

Wike, Amaechi and Tinubu has glittering generalities imbedded in them.

Respondent 2 (Benin Metropolis)

Speeches of Wike during inauguration of PDP campaign council, Tinubu speech in Kaduna. Wike speech during road commissioning and Amaechi speech during APC primary election.

Respondent 3 (Benin Metropolis)

The speech of Wike during road commissioning and Peter Obi.

Respondent 4 (Benin Metropolis)

Other speeches also contain glittering generalities but the one by Amaechi as reported by Channel Television.

Respondent 5 (Benin Metropolis)

The statement had great impact as he almost won the APC primary coming behind the winner.

Respondent 6 (Benin Metropolis)

The Tinubu speech above with others I cannot remember.

From the data available, the respondents were able to identify glittering generalities in the speeches presented to them during Focus Group Discussion sessions. In the sections, respondents were able to elaborate on the meaning of glittering generalities to the fact it thrives on persuasive manipulations.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, using the theories, concepts and empirical studies reviewed in this study as a lens, the findings are discussed as they answer respective Research Questions of the study.

Objective 1: To investigate the glittering generalities antics employed by the politicians under review in their political communication.

In the speeches presented, the question of the ways glittering generalities antics employed by the select politicians in their political communication is answered. Finding from the excerpts of the speeches reviewed show that the select politicians under study made use of glittering generalities in their speeches. More so, from the two sessions of the focus group discussion, it was affirmed by the participants that the politician demonstrated an uncanny application of glittering generalities in their speeches by making statements without substance. The clear mastery of how to use the various techniques of glittering generalities by politicians show how competitive politics can be.

The use of glittering generalities by the politicians was to inspire, promote, rebutting and reawaking new interest from the audience. The adoption of this rhetoric or antics is explainable by the Rhetorical Theory of Aristotle. The outstanding finding by the study from the focus group participants: Of three pisteis of Aristotle's Theory, the audience were more focus on the Ethos (or the credibility of the politicians) far and above logos and pathos.

In support of the finding of the study, eNotes.com (nd) states "glittering generalities are appeals based on emotionally charged concepts using broad claims." Furthermore, the finding is corroborated by the fact what politicians say rarely have real merit to them, it basically sounds great, but with no real reasoning behind the claims.

Furthermore, finding is line with assertion of Kitty (2015) affirms that:

Glittering generalities capitalise on increased sloganized political discourses, leading to a loss of conceptual clarity, over-idealisation and they also, reflect conceptual miserliness, a tendency for some people to prefer simple, superficial and easy answers, rather than having to expend time and effort to grapple with complexity, critical analysis and the need to weigh up evidence.

Kitty (2015) further aligns with the finding of the study when opines that glittering generalities is adopted by people/politicians who seek to stifle debate, sidestep accountabilities and suppress democratic processes. This is because what glittering generalities does is to obscure or gloss over serious areas of disagreement, they hide controversy and submerge alternative propositions.

Objective 2: Evaluate the degree of dexterity and proficiency of the politicians under review in their application of the elements of glittering generalities in their rhetoric.

The data for answering the above question is a culmination of all the data of the speeches already presented heretofore in the work. The answer required here is whether or not the politicians examined in the study were proficient and/or dexterous in their application of the propagandist elements identified in the work, and if so, in what ways and in which particular speeches.

Beginning with Nyesom Wike, a number of speeches show his dexterity and/or proficiency, or otherwise. The particular speeches in reference in this regard are: Wike Mocks PDP, says "As E Dey Sweet Us, E Dey Pain Them" by TVC News, Wike Full Speech at the Inauguration of Rivers State

PDP Campaign Council by TVC News and Atiku Rejected Jonathan's Pleas In 2015, Refused to Support Him – Wike by Channels Television.

From the speeches enumerated above, Nyesom Wike is shown to be proficient and dexterous in attack, deceit/lies, exaggeration, nationalism, bandwagonism, name-calling and glittering generalities.

Finding of the study supports the view of Edem (2019) where he asserts "the importance of language as a medium for communicating political messages cannot be underrated. Language is considered a powerful tool for everyday communication (McDougall, 1975 cited in Edem 2019). By implication, language is the vibrant part in all spheres of life's endeavours. It is essential to building relationships, expressing thoughts, ideas or a need and responses provided as feedback, which may also be positive or negative.

Again, Edem (2005) cited in Edem (2019) is of the view that language/speech is indeed a force to be reckoned with in persuasive communication and invariably in social mobilization, especially in a democratic setting. The finding of the study is in affirmation with assertion above. It shows that political communication has been forceful in some cases to achieve the intent of the message. Furthermore, the key observation is that since most of our leaders tend to use language/speech for mass mobilization, the larger implications to note also is that a good speech event is as a result of careful planning by the public speaker who pays particular attention to details such as: sources, objectives, contents and import or materials meant for dissemination to the public (Edem, 2005 cited in Edem 2019). Again, the finding of the study shows that the politicians under study were more strategic in crafting their speeches.

Objective 3: Analyse if a culmination of these elements in the speeches of the politicians under study result in persuasion of their audiences.

In the speeches and on the focus group sessions, the question of how a culmination of these elements in the speeches of the politicians under study resulted in the persuasion of their audiences is answered. Finding from the focus group sessions which was done with a view to corroborate the resonance of the speeches of the select politicians with the audience reviewed that the participants were not in any way impressed with the speeches they watched, listen to or read. They opined that politicians often say one thing and do another. The believability, acceptability and credibility index fell below expectations. For instance, one respondent from Port Harcourt states that "I don't believe them because their statements do not tally with the realities." While another respondent with a very dissatisfied anger states "I can't mention any speech that I believe or not. Politicians will remain politicians." Furthermore, almost all participants joined in corroborating the assertions of others that the believability of political statements can be a matter of do you.

Similarly, respondents from the Benin metropolis opined like those of Port Harcourt metropolis that political statement should not be taken seriously based on historical failure of our politicians with issues of governance. A respondent asserts that "the speeches are made to win the minds of the electorate hence cannot be a very clear statement from people with deep thinking. It is a political statement hence caution is the watch word."

The respondents from both sessions of the Focus Group Discussion were in agreement not to believe the speeches of politicians more so, the ones they watched, read and listened to during the sessions. They averred not to believe or agree with the claims of politicians owing to the existential disappointments over the years.

The finding of the study is supported by Suhair (2015) who asserts that "most politicians are unaware of the fact that there is a link between what is said, what is meant, and the action conveyed by what is said." That is to say that the attribute and credibility of the political class speak more than the words/speeches they make during campaigns. "Of course, action speaks louder than voice." Again, finding is in consonance with Suhair (2015) where he opines "speech is premised on the fact that people perform various actions through the use of words and when utterances are made, a particular act is performed; this is called speech act." Speech Acts according to Austin (1962) cited

in Suhair (2015) fall into three classes, which are: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act is an act of saying something; that is, the act of producing an utterance. Illocutionary acts are the core of any theory of speech acts. Illocutionary act is identified by the explicit performative. That is, the conventional force achieved in the saying of that utterance. This is realized, according to Austin (1962) cited in Suhair (2015) as the successful realization of the speaker's intention, which for Searle (1969) cited in Suhair (2015) is a product of the listener's interpretation. While the perlocutionary act is the effect or influence on the feelings, thoughts or actions of the listener/hearer. Perlocutionary acts could be inspiring, persuading, consoling, etc. it brings about an effect upon the beliefs, attitudes or behaviors of the addressee. According to Suhair (2015) Politicians articulate a lot of intentions in their speeches: they inform, inspire, assure, accuse, promise, direct, suggest, apologize, disagree, criticize, etc. this underscores the relevance audience believability and acceptability which premised on the previous actions these politicians as perceived by the audience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from the speeches of the selected Nigerian politicians examined, the ultimate destination of whatever narratives of name-calling they deployed was not only to seek control of the people's opinion or making them change their views but rather the ultimate goal was to win election and control the nation. Most of the participants at the focus group session in the two cities were of the view that the politicians can hardly change their toga of non-performance. This view was as a result of past experience.

In most of their speeches examined from the excerpts in the appendices, they were calculatedly maligning their opponent, making statements to portray them in bad light before the right-thinking public. The study concludes that this is done to assert one's superiority and dominance in the political space. In their application of the name-calling narratives and antics, the select politicians were seen to play up it up for their advantage. The application of the glittering generalities technique is found to be explainable by the rhetoric theory and public sphere theory. These theories were very crucial in explaining the reason politicians adopt the antics they use in their campaign speeches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Politicians should avoid making statements without substance. Their practice of glittering generalities where claims are made without facts is not responsible political communication. In the interest of accountability, politicians owe the citizenry facts and figures to back every statement or claim to put out in the public domain.
2. Political communicators should at all times strives to get better at proficiency in their communication. Dexterity is not an immoral thing. Therefore, every politician should strive to improve on their rhetorical skills, and do well to keep their toolbox full at all times.
3. Politicians should say what they do and do what they say. Never will their citizens take them seriously if they cannot match their words with their actions, or their actions with their words.

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