

The 2015 Elections and Campaign of Calumny: The Media Play with Abusive Language in Electioneering

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ABSTRACT

The periods set aside for the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria were the most dreaded periods in the history of Nigerian politics precisely before the elections were conducted. The phobia for these periods did not only lie in the several agitations, which were also grossly heightened by the flourishing insurgencies that ravaged some parts of the country which came as the emerging preludes to the elections. Such phobia was also exacerbated by the provocative outbursts from opposing parties' contenders. Worse still, several self-acclaimed journalists peddle such do-or-die visages through the social media networks, thereby compounding the extant trepidations that the socio-political logjam indexical of the imminent calamities that the approaching elections could trigger. As the elections drew nearer, the volatile background expressed above was more often instigated by the use of very obnoxious language of expressions in campaigns and sloganeering outlets. As a necessity, this study examines such use of objectionable expressions in the pre-2015 Elections era and how such untrammelled use of language qualify as abuses from a pragmatic point of view. Interestingly, the media's patronage of the objectionable language of the Nigerian politicians, has become symptomatic of the hovering phobia for the 2015 Elections which have since been concluded and celebrated. It is this media radiation of such abusive expression that has supplied the data for the study. Relying on the Pragmatic theory, the study establishes the selected data as instances of abusive language deployed by opposing political participants during the 2015 Elections.

Keywords: 2015 Elections, Media, Campaign, Abusive, Language, Electioneering

INTRODUCTION

Before the two days set aside for the 2015 General Elections eventually came to reality, there was that universal fear of whether there was going to be any elections. In some other quarters there was the pessimism that if there was an election it would be replete with irregularities, which would in turn plunge Nigeria into a regime of aggravated crises. Okafor (2015) reasons along the same line of thought when he opines

Following the outbursts of violence in previous elections in Nigeria, fears have been expressed that the 2015 general elections would be marred by a more electoral violence that may even announce the obituary of the Nigerian state. The situation is not helped by the spate of violence that has already rocked the nation at the current stage of electioneering where all forms of violent expressions have been recorded. The argument is that if the

campaigns stage could be as violent as it is that there is much likelihood of more deadly mayhem at the elections proper (1).

The envisaged spate of violence was forecast to propel Nigeria into cessation. Okafor intimates us that prior to the elections, violence had characterized the political campaigns. Several factors could be responsible for this multifaceted pre-election violence, ranging from the use of political thugs and other criminal antics to emasculate oppositions. This paper maintains that more than any other factors, the use of objectionable and highly inflammatory statements by opposing political parties during electioneering campaigns contributes to people's phobic expectancy of violence as Nigeria prepared for its fifth general elections since 1999. Drawing from the rules of Pragmatics, the paper probes into selected utterances of notable politicians, sometimes uttered as loose statements, which

have been adjudged inflammatory and what has made such statements violent-provoking.

AFRICAN POLITICS: NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY AT A GLANCE

Electioneering campaigns are very necessary, if not compulsory pre-elections processes in any nation, state or institution where elections are required to elect officials. The word 'election' itself is so commonplace that one might take it for granted that the most illiterate persons in countries all over the world are abreast of its meaning. The notable pervasive status of the word notwithstanding, this paper proceeds to cite one of the various definitions of Encarta Dictionaries (2009) of election as its working maxim. Hence according to Encarta, election is "an organized event at which somebody is chosen by vote for something, especially a public office". The implication of the word 'organized' might suggest that there are organizers who basically are saddled with the responsibility of organizing (conducting) elections whose credibility would later be measured in terms of the 'level playing ground' provided for the contesters often regarded as candidates. In most countries of the world, the target of electoral processes is quite often to evolve a people-driven government called Democracy believed to be the form of government which can make the wishes of the people manifest.

Understandably, because of their diverse horrendous experiences under different facets of non democratic governments, many countries have identified Democracy as the panacea to their socio-political doldrums and this system of government has outshined several others in patronage. That the US, the most vibrant of all the world powers seems to have succeeded in achieving socio-political equilibrium practicing democracy, especially in spite of all the multifaceted global insurgencies that have attempted to choke the country out of existence, has also made democracy appear very practicable and applicable. Little wonder then that most African countries have imbibed this method of government and election, which is the only method of installing such government, has become recurring decimal in the continent. In fact since the end of the colonial era, there is not a single year that elections are not conducted in one or more of the African countries. Unfortunately, as these elections are conducted with the aims of installing people-friendly governments like the one often observed in the US, attendant problems ensue. These are

problems which are politically debilitating enough to trigger universal unrests and pogroms before, during and after elections. Given these problems, one is tempted to agree with the purists of Political Science who believe that Democracy in African, in spite of the several years of its ascendancy in the continent, has not out-grown its nascence.

Taking Nigeria as a case study, the country has made frantic efforts at installing democratic governments at one time or the other since its independence in 1960. That there was a Coup in 1966 summarizes the anemic nature of the first democracy in Nigeria. Though the 1966 Coup seemed out of favour, the principal actor, Major Nzeogu justified the action of the Nigerian military then when he stated, *inter alia*

Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 percent; those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIPs at least, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds.

Interestingly, Nzeogu's speech was made just a few years into Nigeria's first democracy and surprisingly, the speech has itemized several of the problems that the country still grapples with forty-nine years after it was broadcast. This raises a question about Nigeria's emerging electoral processes on one hand, and people's choices that have elected the corrupt politicians identified by the heroic Coup plotter. Of the electoral process, it has been discovered that Nigeria's electoral body, saddled with the responsibility of installing democracy often evolves with situation, adopting different nomenclatures (FEDECO, NEC, INEC etc) at different times, the latest being INEC. However from its successful conduct of the 2015 General Elections it can be concluded that INEC has mid-wifed a worthy process of elections in Nigeria.

Pre 2015 General Elections in Nigeria: Preparing the Ground for the War of words

INEC's professionalism before, during and after the said elections has been locally and internationally praised. Before the elections, INEC had vowed to conduct credible elections.

Quoting Prof. Attairu Jega, the Commission's boss, he says "The commission is doing its best to ensure free, fair and credible polls . We are going to conduct free, fair and credible elections." This vow was fulfilled when it turned out that the incumbent president, President Goodluck Jonathan was unseated by the tenacious candidate of the opposition party, Gen, Muhammadu Buhari. Surprisingly, the fulfillment of the 'doomsday' prophecy anticipated as the result of the presidential elections failed to materialize, especially as the incumbent President had conceded defeat even before the final declaration of the eventual winner of the presidency. Many felt that this success evolved a trio of heroes – President Jonathan (for accepting defeat when his party felt he should have refused the result vehemently), Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (the presumed winner of the elections) and of course Prof Attairu Jega (who refused to be influenced as he attempted to actualize his vow). Jega himself could not have hidden the joy of a fulfilled political umpire when he states

We are indeed very happy that our elections turned out to be well and to have been recognized both nationally and internationally as free, fair, credible and also peaceful. Leading to the election, some impressions had been created, particularly in the international media as if this may be the end of our country. Thank God it was doomsday prediction which turned out to be false".

It was very worrisome however that as Nigeria approached the 2015 General Elections, many of her citizens did not see anything good coming out of the elections except a doomsday. This is why this researcher has probed into the origin of such predictions of post 2015 election's doomsday and cataclysms. Discovery has therefore been made that the prediction could partly be credited to the various hatred-ridden and personalized inflammatory comments and statements that politicians and their political parties have used as a tool to dehumanize, destabilize, tribalize, bastardize and criticize opposing parties. Cooke and Downie (2015) corroborate this reality when they assert

The 2015 election campaign has been fought in uncompromising fashion, fueling the reputation of Nigerian politics as a do-or-die affair. Inflammatory rhetoric has been used by candidates of the two main parties and both sides have been accused of deploying thugs to

intimidate opponents and attack party rallies, members, and offices.

Similarly, this paper has identified the very problematic terrain that preceded the 2015 elections, which Cooke and Downie have alluded to, as violence-provoking and most likely the most fundamental factor why there were articulated tensions that served as prelude to the conduct of the 2015 General Elections. The paper thus sees such 'inflammatory rhetoric' of the politicians as objectionable expressions crafted out of very obnoxious and abusive use of language, which have gone ahead to reduce the Nigerian electioneering scene to a verbal estate of nothing but provocative expressions. The paper also assumes that the Media's unfortunate inability to moderate the relay of these statements, and the use of sometimes very incisive editorials did contribute immensely to the chagrin of the electorates, and rather than concentrate on how to exercise their franchise on the wake of the election day, the electorates forecast a post 2015 Nigeria which is not secured in the hands of politicians who have not exercised any form of decency in their verbal outbursts. The paper observes what Olayiwola (1991) tags "the Mass media bias in Nigerian political communication" which we also consider as pivotal in the regime of pre election crises that ran-on to the elections proper.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As already specified, this study draws on the theory of Pragmatics. Jacob Mey opines that "Pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of the society". With this definition, may has directed our attention to the fact that meaning within pragmatic terms relies much on extra-linguistic indices which are more often subsumed within the society. As every speaker of an utterance does not speak from a mind that is tabular rasa, the influence of the society in what has been said is therefore incontrovertible. This fact is sustained by George Yule (1996:3) when he states:

Pragmatic is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). It has, consequently, more to do with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean themselves. Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning.

Yule's assertion points our attention to the notion of meaning, which re-echoes the pragmatic 'standing order' that there is always a difference between the meaning of an expression and what a speaker meant by uttering the expression the way he has done. A line thus, has been drawn between denotative (dictionary) meaning of an expression and the connotative (situational/contextual) meaning. The relationship between these two meanings is more like the relationship between Semantics and Pragmatics. Patrick Griffiths (2006:1) clarifies this as follows:

Semantics is the study of the "toolkit" for meaning: knowledge encoded in the vocabulary of the language and in its patterns for building more elaborate meanings, up to the level of sentence meanings. **Pragmatics** is concerned with the use of these tools in meaningful communication. Pragmatics is about the interaction of semantic knowledge with our knowledge of the world taking into account contexts of use.... Language is for communicating about the world outside of language. English language expressions like *arm* and *your arm* and *hold out* are linked to things, activities and so on. A general-purpose technical term that will appear fairly often in the book is **denote**. It labels the connections between meaningful items of language and aspects of the world – real or imagined – that language users talk and write about. *Hold out your arm*

Mey distinguishes between Micropragmatics and Macropragmatics. While he subsumes aspects Metalanguage in language usage as indices of Macropragmatics, Mey is of the opinion that aspects like Context, Implicature, Inference and Reference qualify to stay under the umbrella of Micropragmatics. Within the frame of this study, we shall rely on the analytical tools under Micropragmatics to appropriate selected data from the countless disparaging expressions that politicians used against one another in the pre-elections period of the 2015 General Elections.

2015 General Elections: Probing into a Manifesto of Abuse among Nigerian Politicians

As the preparations for the 2015 General Elections thickened, it appeared that parties derailed from the focus of their manifestos and code-switched into verbal assaults on opposing

political caucus. Accordingly, Elections Factsheet vol II, No VII notes:

Provocative statements by political stakeholders have always been perceived to be the main trigger of political violence in Nigeria. With the 2015 General Elections being the fifth in a row since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, it is expected that the political campaign process would have developed into a broad-base policy dialogue platform, rather than a stage for show of verbal aggression, fear, anger and acrimony.

The result of this was the scenario of the 'dialogue of the deaf' where every interlocutor stuck to his perverted ideology without hearing the other side's argument. This then became the absolute cause for unguarded statements that proceeded from the stables of the ever-desperate Nigerian Politicians. Elections Factsheet also adduces to this fact when it stated that "International observers and Nigerian citizen groups have observed that a key risk factor to 2015 election security is unguarded statements by political gladiators". In furtherance of this, Election Factsheet observes, "Many influential political actors have made numerous inciting statements in this period leading to February 2015 elections". These statements, no doubt, did incite the political class of the country in particular and members of the public in general. As such statements prepared opponents for battles, they also instilled fear into the members of the public. For instance as we are told by Cooke and Downie,

Perhaps the most troubling potential election contingency is the possibility of a disputed presidential result. Both leading parties [PDP and APC] are adamant that they will win. The opposition APC has said that it will abide by the results if they are fair but has not laid out its criteria for making this judgment call. It has also said that it has lost faith in the process for hearing complaints and adjudicating disputes. The APC leadership deems the 180-day legal limit on the adjudication of electoral disputes—including the collation of evidence, a hearing, and possible appeal—to be a fundamentally unfair process that is vulnerable to stalling tactics by adjudication officials who deliberately run down the clock. In the event that it feels it has been cheated out

of victory, the APC has threatened to form a parallel government (My emphasis).

For the first time in this paper, a mention of the two prominently contending parties has been done. Although the Nigeria's electoral system is multi-parties, the political duel has always been between two parties with the remaining political parties having themselves muscled out of any meaningful contention. APC was cloned months before the General elections, out of various political parties with intersecting interests of unseating the ruling party, PDP. With the evolution of APC, PDP became threatened especially given the spate of defections from the party. The party's campaign organization re-strategized into the use of inciting statements. APC also did something similar in the desperate desire to usurp governance. Consequentially, according to Election Factsheet, many influential political actors have made numerous inciting statements in this period leading up to the February 2015 elections. Some of them are highlighted below.

- If the 2015 elections are rigged, the party will not recognize the outcome and will go ahead and form a parallel government. (News Express, 3rd May, 2014)
- You should not be bothered with 'cockroaches of politics', Cockroaches are only in the toilets even at home. If you see a cockroach in your house crush them (Premium Times on 19th November, 2014)
- There will be bloodshed and those who feel short-changed nay take the war path and the country may not be the same again (Osun Defender, 2nd December, 2013)
- 2015 is more than do-or-die. You are a man and I am a man, we are going to meet at the battle field. (News Express 3rd May, 2014)
- If what happened in 2011 should happen again in 2015, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood.

Socio-culturally speaking, most of these statements are bereft of civility. In fact, they are coercive, abusive and vulgar. They are statements that could elicit very negative responses from the recipients and trigger violence. Speaking from the gamut of the Law, there are laid down rules that are cut out to promote civil utterances in political campaigns. Articles 7 and 8 of the Political Parties' Code of Conduct (2013) prohibit certain remarks from political contenders. These Articles state categorically that

No political parties or its candidates shall during campaign resort to the use of inflammatory "language, provocative actions, images, or manifestation that incites violence, hatred, contempt or intimidation against another party or candidate or any person or group of persons on ground of ethnicity, gender or for any other reasons; and no political party or its candidate shall make inciting statement through broadcast, press statement, handbills, pamphlets, leaflets or other publications. (cited in Election Factsheet).

A study of the statements above, and several others made by politicians across political parties shows that all the political parties did contravene this aspect of the Law. Of interest to this paper is a screaming headline titled 'Nigerians Be Warned' sponsored by a Governor of a ruling party to canvass vote for the incumbent President. The advert paraphrased a Bible verse from Deuteronomy 30 vs 15 as 'I have set before the life and death...'. After placing the pictures of Heads of states and President who died in office contiguously to that of the 72 year old Presidential candidate of the opposition party, the advert proceeded to ask a rhetorical question: 'will you allow history to repeat itself?' and concluded with, 'Enough of state burials. Nigerians vote wisely'. From all indications, this advert contravenes the recommendations of Law whether we view it from the Articles above or from the Section 95 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) which also regulates political campaigns. This section of the Act, in sub-sections 1 and 2 clearly states that:

- No political campaign or slogan shall be tainted with abusive language directly or indirectly likely to injure religious, ethnic, tribal or sectional feelings.
- Abusive, intemperate, slanderous or base language or insinuations or innuendoes designed or likely to provoke violent reactions or emotions shall not be employed or used in political campaigns.

It is obvious that the Nigerian law does not mince word in this regard and there is no gainsaying it that the concerned politicians were law breakers and it is unarguable that their outbursts during the pre 2015 were capable of serving as catalyst to violence.

A PRAGMATIC VIEW OF PRE-2015 LANGUAGE OF CAMPAIGN

The basic interest of this study is to operate within the tenet of language usage and the functional meanings plausible within certain contextual frame. This is why we shall turn to Pragmatics which is a field of language studies that probes into meaning beyond the ordinary level of semanticity. As already implied, Pragmatics is the study of communicative functions of Language in relation to the contextual/situational ambience (Mey 2001, Paul Baker and Sibonile Ellece 2011, Levinson 1983, Thomas 1995, Yule 1996). Pragmatics also shows interest in how people make sense of language, focusing more on how they achieve meaning in particular contexts, by taking into account things like how, where and when something is said, who says it, what the relationship is between the speaker and hearer, and how background knowledge of speaker/hearer facilitate meaning to ambiguous expressions. Also within the study of Pragmatics is politeness theory “which is concerned with how people establish and maintain social cohesion” (Baker and Ellece, 2011).

Because there is a loss of decency, politicians encoded their messages without recourse to the maxims of politeness and it became quite difficult to establish social cohesion which could have fostered a hitch-free communication among them. To worsen the scenario, the context within which the political dialogues were encoded had been labeled as a ‘do-or-die’ situation where whatever was said could be taken in context or out of context. In the following section, we shall attempt the analysis of the selected texts. Also within the frame of Pragmatic discourse, there is a sub-discourse referred to as Speech Act. According to Mey, “Speech Acts are verbal actions happening in the world. Uttering a Speech Act, I do something with my words: I perform an activity that (at least intentionally) brings about a change in the existing state of affairs...” (95). Consequently, within this frame of mind, all the political utterances highlighted for discussion here were rendered with specific socio-political intentions which qualify as illocutionary forces. It is however a different ball-game to establish whether or not these intentions were realized especially as the perlocutionary powers to interpret the utterances lie with the members of the public or the people of the opposing political camps, depending on the situational context. We

may consider the following within the theoretical frame of pragmatic.

- If the 2015 elections are rigged, the party will not recognize the outcome and will go ahead and form a parallel government. (implicature)
- You should not be bothered with ‘cockroaches of politics’, Cockroaches are only in the toilets even at home. If you see a cockroach in your house crush them (metaphoring)
- There will be bloodshed and those who feel short-changed may take the war path and the country may not be the same again. (Constative Speech Act)
- 2015 is more than do-or-die. You are a man and I am a man, we are going to meet at the battle field. (metaphoring)
- If what happened in 2011 should happen again in 2015, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood. (implicature)
- ‘Nigerians Be Warned’ (imperative)
- I have set before thee life and death...(Biblical allusion)
- ‘will you allow history to repeat itself?’ (Rhetorical question)
- Enough of state burials (imperative)
- On Saturday, if anyone of you goes against Ambode, who I picked, that is your end. (Implicature)

As expressed above, all the personalities to whom these utterances were credited had certain intentions within the framework of politics. Their intentions can be understood via the volatile politicking as the elections drew nearer. These intentions can be understood in line with what Brown and Levinson (1987) tag as ‘face’ which they define within the strict tenet of Pragmatics as “the public self-image which every member wants to claim for himself” (61). Brown and Levinson distinguish between positive face and negative face. Positive face, to them, is the desire to gain approval of others while negative face is the desire to be unimpeded by others in one’s actions. In making their political face, the politicians seemed to have combined the two facets of ‘face’ in wanting to be approved by the people they had earlier promised heaven and earth in their manifestos, and also in wanting to out-talk any opponent. This is obvious in utterances 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10 actually directed at perceived opponents.

The import of statements in 1, 5 and 10 can be understood in terms of what pragmaticians call conversational implicature. As Alan Cruse (2006) educates us, Implicatures are

parts of the meanings of utterances which, although intended, are not strictly part of 'what is said' in the act of utterance, nor do they follow logically from what is said. There are two basic sorts of implicature: (a) those which have a stable association with particular linguistic expressions (**conventional implicatures**), such as the element of surprise associated with *yet* in *Haven't you finished yet?* (speaker does not actually say he or she is surprised), and (b) those which must be inferred, and for which contextual information is crucial (**conversational implicatures**) (85).

These utterances qualify to be categorized as conversational implicature given the circumstances that the call for violence could be deduced from them. What needs to be observed in these statements is that they are crafted to follow the sequence of if p then q. For instance in, if the 2015 elections are rigged.; If what happened in 2011 should happen again in 2015 and On Saturday, if anyone of you goes against [my candidate] ... "the speakers took the facts that their audiences operated from the same context to code their messages. Though in 'if what happened on 2011 should happen again' the speaker has not mentioned what happened. He has encoded his message ellipting what happened in 2011, yet the receivers got the message that right because it was easy for them to deduce what the speaker had meant in 'the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood', especially since the logic of if p then q applies. Bilmes (1986) clarifies this analysis below:

In everyday talk, we often convey propositions that are not explicit in our utterances but are merely implied by them. Sometimes we are able to draw such inferences only by referring what has been explicitly said to some conversational principles (27).

Bilmes clarification here sheds light on the fact that there was a conversational convention that could have been deduced from the 'if' segments of statement 1, 5 and 10.

Also in the above instances, the speakers and the hearers rely on what Bach and Harnish (1979) call mutual contextual beliefs (MCBs) in the

course of interaction. The core tenet of MCBs states:

In a speech event, a speaker has an intention and the listener or hearer will make some inference, both of them will base their role on certain facts shared by them. Such facts which are well known to both of them are vital to the encoding and decoding of message.

For the author of statement 1 to have said 'if the 2015 elections are rigged...' underscores the pragmatic proposition that previous elections were rigged. Hence the premise p obtains; and since p implies q as it were, it was natural for people to envisage the p part of the utterance, which is 'the party will not recognize the outcome and will go ahead and form a parallel government'. There are also implied propositions in this part of the utterance. Even as the speaker might say he never mention war, yet 'not recognizing the outcome of the election' and 'forming a parallel government' could not have been achieved without war.

Also in utterance 10, which is an extract of an address by an Oba to a section of non-indigenes in his town, the tendency of post-election xenophobia is implied in 'that is your end'. Drawing from the notion of contextual background, one can suspect that, for the Oba to emphasize 'On Saturday' indicates that all the participants are aware of what would happen on that Saturday and that the speaker already had information that the receivers had plans to 'go against' Ambode, his candidate. The Oba's message, taken in context passes for a threat and this is pragmatically so.

Deploying the use of 'cockroaches', the author of utterance 2 had beckoned to the metaphor of denigration. He aggravated the infamy of his referents confining the perceived political opponents to spiteful object such as the 'cockroach' whose existence is limited to toilets and must be crushed when sighted in homes. According to Mey, metaphors are drawn from repositories of our past experiences "and for guidance in dealing with new ones" (302). The speaker of utterance 2 assumes a position that his audience is aware of cockroaches and he dwelt much on their knowledge to forecast the destruction of his referents. This is in view of the assumption that the eventual end of cockroaches is 'being crushed'. Also in this statement, the intent for confrontation is implied, aggravating people's fear of the unknown in respect of the approaching elections.

The same metaphoric view could be allowed the utterance no 4. The application the metaphor of 'do-or-die' and 'battle field' portends danger and the readiness for war. Hence, people did not just forecast a cataclysmic end for the country but for such all containing provocative statements that eked out of the supposedly respectable Nigerians.

The statements in nos 6, 7, 8 and 9 cannot be taken in isolation from one another. They are the text of an inciting advert sponsored by a Governor to disrepute a presidential candidate of the opposing party. The screaming heading of the advert 'Nigerians Be warned' is imperatively crafted but pragmatically suggests coercion. This is succeeded by a misleadingly paraphrased Bible verse that was intended to sound prophetic. The author of the text was probably aware that Nigerians, prior to these periods, had turned to religion as only panacea to the ensuing political debacle and anything traced to either the Bible or the Quran would influence the public. Therefore taken within context, people interpreted this allusion as a prophecy of doom. This is followed by the rhetorical question 'will you allow history to repeat itself?' which pragmatically functions as 'warning' against voting for the older presidential candidate. This interpretation is substantiated by the tactful placement of the pictures of the Nigerian leaders who died in power contiguous to that of the candidate campaigned against who was also of an old age. Readers did not have to wait till the final words of the advert to read in between lines to conclude what the messenger had meant. The encoder's message was made profoundly clearer when the concluding part of the advert interjects with 'enough of state burials' and the opposing party went berserk calling for war.

THE NIGERIAN MEDIA AND THE REGIME 2015 ELECTIONEERING

At this juncture, it is convenient to elaborate on the actions or inactions of the Media in the peddling of such inflammatory utterances that pervade the 2015 campaigns. The Punch and The Sun news papers published the advert which suggested that what happened to the dead leaders in the pictures might happen to the APC candidate, hence taken as a death wish for the presidential candidate. There have been reactions from different quarters on whether such an advert should have been given publicity. The candidate rebuked in the advert immediately noted the media error in the publication of the advert when he said

First, it is totally unprofessional and abusive to Ethical Codes of Journalism for Punch and Sun Newspapers to publish such content. Punch and Sun Newspapers must revoke the advert immediately and apologize to the people of Nigeria,... (Daily Post).

The publication of the said advert and several other inciting ones by Punch and Sun is a product of what Olayiwola calls press bias. According to Olayiwola the ownership of many of the publishing/media houses could be traced to many of the partisan politicians who use their media houses to accentuate their political desires.

One of the attributes that Olayiwola has arrogated to the Nigerian media is "the deliberate manipulation of the political process" and he notes that the manner with which the media performs its various functions "affects the lives of individuals, groups and social organizations, as well as the course of domestic and international politics" (33-34). This is a reality that establishes press partisanship in Nigerian politics and what we observe is the peddling of news that was pro one party than the other.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to establish the use of inflammatory speeches in the course of the electioneering processes that preceded the 2015 elections. The paper probes into the pragmatic conditions that made the speeches qualify as abuses or inflammatory ones within Nigeria's political context. The paper concludes on the note that the media patronage of these speeches contributed to the pre- election violence that characterized the 2015 elections. As at the time of the writing of this study, the election 2015 had come and gone, recording very negligible instances of violence, not minding the explosive background that surrounded it. Truly, the election was prone to violence. In fact, it would have been made susceptible to the greatest violence of all times, but for the fact that the presidential candidate of the ruling party conceded defeat, the prophesies of anticipated confrontation, cessation, impasse and socio-economic stalemate was abated. The conclusion here is that elections in Nigeria would have been less dreadful if politicians had minded their language and play the game of politics according to the democratic rules.

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