

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF IPOB SPEECHES AND JINGLES AGAINST ANAMBRA 2017 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

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Abstract

This study sets to analyze IPOB speeches and jingles against the Anambra State 2017 Gubernatorial Election with the aim of highlighting the stylistic tools used to effectively persuade the electorate to boycott the election. IPOB texts have before now attracted little scholarly attention. The theoretical framework that drives this study is the foregrounding theory as propounded by Niazi&Gautam (2010.) Using purposive sampling technique, 7 texts selected from www.ipob.org and www.ipobgovernment.org were used for this research. The analysis reveals that IPOB used such stylistic features as repetition of ethnic slur, metaphors, hyperbole, propaganda, registers of war, 'we' and 'them' linguistic phenomena, hate speech and name calling to discourage the masses from participation in the November 18, 2017 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election.

Keywords: IPOB, Anambra, Electorate, Gubernatorial Election, Jingles

1.0 Introduction

Nigeria is a conglomerate of diverse nations, with different nationalistic interests, merged together for the administrative convenience of the colonial British government. The different peoples brought together under the name of Nigeria are politically, socially, economically, culturally, religiously, linguistically independent of one another and led a self-sustaining lifestyle before they were disrupted by the invading British colonial masters. By 1914 the colonial masters

had gained full control of their conquered territory and merged the Northern and Southern Protectorates into one entity called Nigeria, and administered them differently. The governments were later unified and granted independence in 1960. From that time till date, the country has been witnessing political and religious instability. Among these were the power tussle of the Action Group in the West, the Tiv Revolt, the census crises, coups and counter coups, election rigging, tribalism, nepotism, genocide against the Igbo in Northern Nigeria, the Biafran secession and the civil war. As if these were not enough, ethnic militias and pressure groups arose in the different regions of the nation each agitating over perceived injustice, maladministration, and or marginalization. Among these is the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the Eastern Nigeria from which the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) separated.

The Indigenous People of Biafra is led by Maazi Nnamdi Kanu. *Adonu posits that* the promoters of the Biafran secessionist movement have often persuasively communicated to the masses that the postwar transitional justice programme of the Nigerian government has been inefficient, and has failed to address the human rights abuses and genocidal crimes committed against the south-

easterners during the Civil War (1). IPOB agitators have vehemently pointed out in the pages of their newspapers and in social media that since the end of the war, there has not been a president of Nigeria from Igbo extraction. They further posit that Nigeria has been ruled for over forty years by the Hausa-Fulani from the North and the Yoruba from the Southwest. In this regard, the average Igbo who follow IPOB news feel they are still being punished because of the aborted secession of Biafra and are thus marginalized. This mindset gave rise to new wave of agitations and a renewed call for another Biafran independence championed in the region and in the diaspora by the Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB).

It is against this backdrop that the group and their supporters deploy the persuasive powers of language to sway the masses to support their agenda and jettison the Nigerian project. This led to a massive boycott of the November 18, 2017 governorship election in Anambra state, which the group tagged OfeNsara Day, encouraging the electorate to stay back in their homes and enjoy themselves rather than going out to exercise their franchise. The outcome was a gubernatorial election with the lowest turnout of the electorate in the history of General elections in the state. It was the level of compliance to their messages that attracted the attention of this researcher to find out how language was used to achieve this end. The following research questions would be addressed in the course of this study:

1. To what extent does the language of IPOB influence the mobilization of the masses against participation in the November 18, 2017 Governorship Election in Anambra State? How did the language of the speeches and jingles succeed in mobilizing the electorate against the 2017 gubernatorial election?
2. What stylistic devices were contained in the IPOB speeches and jingles?

This study is relevant to scholarship, because it will contribute to existing literature on the discourse of ethnic militia groups.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 What is Style?

Ebeogu and Nwokocha define style as a distinctive way of writing. It is the art both inherent and acquired, and is often associated with the creative imagination. This implies that style is indeed a distinctive feature (206). It distinguishes one pattern of writing or behaviour from another. According to Widdowson, “at the heart of literary creation is the struggle to devise patterns of language which will bestow upon the linguistic items concerned just with those values which will convey the individual writer’s personal vision (37).

2.2 Stylistics

Stylistics on the other hand, according to Anagbogu, Mbah&Eme is conceptualized as the linguistic study of literary appreciation (4). Crystal is of the view that stylistics is a branch of linguistics which studies the features of situationally distinctive uses (varieties) of language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individual and social groups in their use of language (3). Stylistics aims to account for how texts project meaning, how readers construct meaning and why readers respond to texts the way that they do. Stylistic analysis, therefore exposes or reveals authors sensitivity to language use especially in written texts. Lyons adds that the literary use of languages can be seen as one in which the exploitation of their resources at all levels of their structure is particularly effective and creative (290).

2.3 Approaches to Style

There are various approaches to style such as: style as choice, the man, deviation, conformity period, time and situation.

a. Style as choice

The choice of a writer when it comes to writing is influenced by the social condition of his environment because he is faced with paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes of choices in order to get the most appropriate word for his writing (Anagbogu, Mbah&Eme, 3).

Paradigmatic axis: this refers to the vertical axis, here the writer out of words of related meaning chooses the one that is most appropriate for the context of his writing.

Syntagmatic axis: this refers to the horizontal axis, whereby a writer makes a choice between alternative expressions.

b. Style as the Man

Okoh, Umera and Anyadiegwu points out that the man being referred to here is the writer himself (46). The notion believes that a writer writes based on his personality, religious inclination, geographical location, education, and so on. Although, there are distinctive features that distinguish a writer from another. This special way of presenting information is what this notion considers as style as the man.

c. Style as Deviation

Okoh, Umera and Anyadiegwu point out that deviation is one of the principles of stylistics (46). It is simply the breaking of rules which others obey, therefore, when a writer deviates from the normal way of saying or writing something in order to create a unique style, it is said to be style as deviation. The concept of style as the deviation is based on the notion that there are rules, conventions, and regulations that guide the different activities that must be executed. So, when these rules are not followed, deviation sets in.

Deviation can occur at any level of language description such as phonological, graphological, syntactic lexico-semantic, and textual level.

d. Style as Conformity

Knowing that there are norms that guide every literary work of art that is presented in line with these norms is said to be style as conformity. For instance, every literary work of drama and prose must conform to its norms of writing in acts and scenes, chapters and paragraphs, and so on.

e. Style as Situation

Here a writer writes according to the register of his or her area of specialization. This is because each field of study has its distinct language. For instance, in English, we have vocabulary, spelling patterns, pronunciation, and many others. The same goes with literature, its language includes words like; climax, comedy, tragedy, figures of speech, and so on.

f. Style as Period or Time

This is whereby most writers write in line with the language in use during their time of writing because language is a broad term in which style is located. For instance, in English, we talked about the old English period, middle English, and modern/present-day English period.

2.4 Branches of Stylistics

The various branches of stylistics depending on the school of thought lexical stylistics, linguistic stylistics, phono-stylistics, functional stylistics, and literary stylistics.

i. Lexical Stylistics

This studies the functions of direct and figurative meanings, it also looks at the way the contextual meaning of a word is realized in the text. It deals with various types of connotations, expressive, evaluative, emotive, neologisms, dialectal words, and their behaviour in the text. At times, words repeat some lexical items, near-synonyms may also be used to foreground the intended message (Bradford, 133).

ii. Linguistic Stylistics

It explores the linguistic features of a text, that is, the use of language and its effects on a text. A linguistic stylistician looks at the forms and functions of language in literary work. Linguistic

stylistics also studies the devices in languages such as rhetorical figures and syntactical patterns that are considered to produce an expressive or literary style (Ayeomoni, 177).

iii. Phono-Stylistics

Okoh, Umera and Anyadiegwu posit that Phone-Stylistic deals with the phonetical organization of prose and poetic texts (47). Stylistics phonetics pays attention to style-forming phonetic features, which describe the variance of pronunciation occurring in different types of speech. Special attention is paid to features of prose and poetry like rhythm, rhythmical structures, rhyme alliteration, and so on. It also studies deviation in normative pronunciation.

iv. Functional Stylistics

This involves all sub-division of the language and its use. Its objective is the correlation of the message and the communicative situation.

v. Individual Style Study

This deals with the style of the author, it also looks for a correlation between the creative concept of the author and the language of his work.

vi. Literary Stylistics

This is concerned with figurative and evocative uses of language which characterizes the message being interpreted. It studies the way language is used by a definite person or literary movement. The ultimate purpose of literary stylistics is to explain the individual message of the writing using terms that brings out the significance of the message to others and also to decode a message that has been encoded in an unfamiliar way to express its meaning in a familiar term (Ayeomoni, 167).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Niazi&Gautam stylistic theory. This theory postulates that variations in language use embodies different varieties of meaning (106). Therefore, deviations from the norm in the use of language provides an opportunity to understand a speaker's message to the audience. This theory is a useful tool to describe particular characteristics of the text in the discourse of IPOB during the 2017 Governorship election in Anambra State.

According to Niazi&Gautam deviation at the lexical level deals with the words/vocabulary of a language. The significance of the words, their semantic possibilities, irony, emotional associations and other effects are analysed at this level (107). The evocative power of words is determined by the particular connection between diction and imagery and context of usage (Niazi&Gautam, 109). At the syntactic level, foregrounding theory is interested in the study of the structure of phrases, clauses and sentences. Grammatical (syntactical) deviation is a phrase containing a word whose grammatical class violates the expectations created by the surrounding words (Niazi&Gautam, 107). Also, Niazi&Gautam posit that Semantic deviations occur when the meaning of words violates the expectations created by the surrounding words (107). They usually violate the rules of selectional restrictions which are the semantic restrictions that a word imposes on the environment in which it occurs.

3.0 Methodology

This study used qualitative research method of analysis. This method is preferred in this study because it is suitable for investigating the stylistic features embedded in IPOB speeches and jingles during the Anambra State 2017 Governorship Election. The study population comprised all speeches made by IPOB against the November 18 Governorship Election in Anambra State., But 14 texts were purposefully selected for the analysis. They were downloaded from www.ipob.org and www.ipobgovernment.org. Niazi and Gutam (2010) was adopted for framework for analysis.

4.0 Analysis

Use of Pronoun: 'we' 'us' 'our' 'they' 'them'

Text 1

They oppress us to the extent where we have to look for any way available to survive despite the fact that our land feeds them all.

They are ingrates I must say.

Anytime we shout foul play they are quick to tag us with names that will give them power to kill us and commit grievous genocide on our lands.

The use of they and them to refer to the Nigerian government is stylistic device to tag Nigerian government as the oppressor of the Biafran course. The above texts also shows that NnamdiKanu also used our,we, and usto tag the Igbos as the oppressed. This device has become a regular use of language which secessionist agitators have used extensively in the course of promoting their secessionist agenda.

Text 2

1. Ojukwu rose;

They tagged him REBEL

2. Ken SaroWiwa rose;

They tagged him CRIMINAL

3. Our Youths in the coast rose;

They tagged them MILITANTS

4. Now MaziNnamdi KANU rose:

They tagged him and the entire Biafran race (IPOB) as TERRORIST

It is only in Nigeria where terrorists do not carry arms and don't kill but rather the supposed organized government is the one killing them brutally.

It is only in Nigeria where dreaded terror groups are ignored and called CRIMINALS and non-violent race are termed terrorists.

It is only in Nigeria where terrorists go to court to combat the government about the ill treatment of their people.

Just like in text 1, text 2 also shows that the promoters of IPOB made use of the pronoun 'they' 'them' to refer to the Nigerian government. There is also the use of 'we' 'us' 'our' to refer to the IPOB agitators. For instance: They oppress us to the extent where we have to look for any way available to survive despite the fact that our land feeds them all. The sentence clearly points out the use of 'we' 'us' 'our' and 'they' 'them' is a stylistic device that point out the target or the audience that the speeches of IPOB is meant for and the purpose such speeches are meant to achieve.

Use of Repetition

Text 3:

THERE WILL BE NO ELECTION IN BIAFRA LAND THERE WILL BE NO ELECTION IN BIAFRA LAND

1. When Fulani headsmen wipe Agatu with AK47 you say nothing even when we want to protest? You said no!

2. Buhari one side appointment you say nothing?

3. IPOB killing: you do nothing even to ask Nigeria government why killing your people?

4. Nigeria media destroying the image of Biafra all over the world you say nothing?

5. All federal roads in Biafra land is dead trap you say nothing? Go and see Enugu vs Onitsha road you will come back with testimony?

6. *All federal school in Biafra land is dilapidated, you say nothing?*
7. *All Biafra graduate are jobless and unemployed, you say nothing?*

Furthermore, there is also the use of repetition at the end of each of the question posed by IPOB. For instance, the phrase ‘*you say nothing?*’ at each of the sentence. This kind of construction was meant to create special stylistic effect on the text. Therefore, the above text is a linguistic strategy to reawaken the minds of the masses on the need to comply with the no election directive.

Use of metaphor

Text 4:

Holy holyholyNnamdiKalu is another saviour
Holy holyholyNnamdiKalu is another saviour
Holy holyholyNnamdiKalu is another saviour
Holy holyholyNnamdiKalu is another saviour

In the above jingle, NnamdiKalu was metaphorically portrayed as a messiah and a saviour. The stylistic implication of this was to make the masses believe in his directive as it concerns the boycott of the election. This strategy worked effectively, because it make the people boycott the election.

Propaganda and Name calling

Text 5:

We are not interested in anything violent or war to achieve the sovereign state of Biafra because IPOB have many potent weapons than AK47, bombs and mortars. Truth as our leader said MaziNnamdiKanu has been preaching all along without fear or favour is the only weapon at our disposal. Now that APGA has pitched itself as the arch-enemy of Biafrans, and Chief supporter of Nigeria government oppression of Biafra. It is good for the political gladiators to understand that it is either Nigeria government announce Biafra referendum or there will be no peace again in Nigeria.

Propaganda and name-calling is another stylistic feature embedded in the discourse of IPOB. This strategy makes the IPOB agitators to draw attention to them on how the Federal Government have dehumanized the Biafrans. Here, they portrayed NnamdiKanu as a saint and a messiah.

Hate speech and use of threat

Text 6:

Igbo

Onyetuo vote o nabaugwu Hausa
Obiano...
Onyetuo vote o nabaugwu Hausa
Obiano..
Onyetuo vote o nabaugwu Hausa
Okorocho Obiano...
Onyetuo vote o nabaugwu Hausa
Okoro-hausa

English

If you vote, you go and live with the Hausa people
Obiano...
If you vote you go and live with the Hausa people
Obiano...
If you vote you go and live with the Hausa people
Okoro-hausa

Another feature encoded in the above text is hate speech. The speech is regarded as hate speech because the promoters of IPOB agenda resorted to name calling in the bid to press home their demand. The above text which is a transcript of a video jingle is one of the numerous texts which was used to force the masses against participation in the November 17 governorship election in Anambra State. The jingle was widely circulated in the internet and social media platform through facebook and Whatsapp. This text contributed greatly towards the election boycott in Anambra State.

Text 7:

But as unscrupulous merchants, the colonial masters and their willing domestic slaves couldn't care less than focus on their ulterior motives in the exploitation and pillaging of the natural resources in Biafra land, while the indigenous people are strategically kept in darkness and forcefully confined in the zoo against their will. But after many years of agonizing life in the zoo republic, the people continued crying and petitioning their God in prayer for his divine intervention.

The above text is a typical example of a deviation from the normal language use. Here in text, NnamdiKalu called Nigeria a zoo which can also be seen as hate speech. In the above allegory of a zoo, it became crystal clear that NnamdiKalu intentionally called Nigeria a zoo which stylistically means that all Nigerians are animals including the Igbo people that he (NnamdiKalu) is trying to fight for. From the analysis of data, it was discovered that the linguistic threat issued by the outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra forced most registered voters to stay away from the November 18, 2017.

Registers of Wars

- i. We are not interested in anything violent or war to achieve the sovereign state of Biafra because IPOB have many potent weapons than AK47, bombs and mortars.
- ii. They tagged him REBEL
- iii. Ken SaroWiwa rose;
They tagged him CRIMINAL
- iv. Our Youths in the coast rose;
They tagged them MILITANTS
- v. Now MaziNnamdi KANU rose:
They tagged him and the entire *Biafran race (IPOB) as TERRORIST (Text, 2)*

From the analysis of all the text analysed in this study shows that the promoters of IPOB cause made use of register of war to show their level grievances as it concerns the marginalization of the Biafrans in Nigeria. In texts 2, words *such as kill, rebel, criminal, militant, terrorist, blood, slavery, freedom, AK47, terrorist* just to mention a view were registers of war used to frighten voters against participation in the election. The above registers of war shows that IPOB used well-crafted and manipulated language to persuade the masses against participation in the election.

5.0 Finding

This study has affirmed that the use of pronoun, propaganda, name calling, repetition, metaphor, hate speech and name calling and registers of war were among the stylistics devices used by IPOB to discourage the masses against participation in the November 18, 2017 Anambra State election.

6.0 Conclusion

This study has shown that it is factual to state that the speeches, and jingles of IPOB had a great stylistic impact, because the stylistics features embedded in them succeeded to a great extent towards mobilizing the masses against the participation in the November 18, 2017 Governorship election. This is evident in the low turnout of voters during the election. The choice of words of IPOB created fear in the minds of the electorate by using their speeches and jingle to create the atmosphere of fear. Therefore, the masses out desperate need to protect their lives complied with the call for election boycott.

7.0 Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, it is recommended that the government should use the medium of language to engage the promoters of IPOB in an open discussion and dialogue to

finding a lasting solution to secessionist struggle in Nigeria. There is also the need for the federal government to convene a forum for national dialogue where nationality groups and other interest groups in the Nigerian society would meet to meaningfully express their feelings about the Nigerian state and discuss their ideas on how the country can move forward. Also, there is the need to create roles for the members of these ethnic organizations especially the leadership cadre of the secessionist organization in Nigeria.

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