

# **A Gricean Analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's Channels TV Interview**

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## **Abstract**

Conversationalists are noted to cooperate in every interactive discourse situation they find themselves in, thus, the affirmation of the cooperative principle as propounded by the philosopher, Paul Grice. The essence of this is to have successful discourses. In being cooperative, speakers or writers are to adhere to the maxims of cooperative principle, but this is not always the case as there are instances of non-observance of these maxims which results in conversational implicature. It is said specifically that political discourses are enveloped with non-observance of maxims to achieve different socio-political goals of having them in political discourses. This study analyzes the interview of President Muhammadu Buhari in order to unveil the maxims of non-observance (flouting, violation and opting out of maxim) therein. Eleven responses were randomly selected for this analysis. The study adopted the theory of cooperative principle and discovered that violations, flouting and opting out of maxims were used in order to structure the political discourse to achieve a desired goal.

**Keywords:** political speech, maxim, cooperative principle, political discourse, conversational implicature

## **Introduction**

Language is a powerful means employed by humans in communicating their ideas, convictions, cultures and opinions. It is a tool used to convey information from one person to another; from generation to generation. In human relations, language is used in conversations basically to share ideas or pass on information.

Conversationalists, in conversations, try to meet the needs of the other participant(s) by cooperation. According to Grice, for interlocutors to have successful conversation, they must make contributions as much as is required and try to operate in the “cooperative principle” in order to achieve frictionless communication.

Speakers in any specific sociocultural context based on discourse, are expected to employ the cooperative principles to achieve their goal(s). Interviews are instances of conversation that involve conversational feature of adjacency pairs, which can be described as a pair of utterances where the second contribution is functionally dependent on the first, such as those found in a greeting or question-answer sequence (Lambrou, 2014, p.143).

Interviews are instances of interactional discourse situations that involve two or more participants that take turns in contributing information for their conversational exchanges. Interviews are also evident in political discourse. The interview of President Muhammadu Buhari is an instance of a political discourse.

Studies on political discourse have been in existence as researchers investigate the nature of political discourses. How political actors employ language- in such discourse situations and the effect, more or less, created by such discourse are also the goals of researchers. There has been little or no study that has been conducted to investigate the non-observance of Gricean maxim of cooperation in the interview sessions of President Muhammadu Buhari. Therefore, the researchers focus to explore the non-observance of cooperative principles maxims in the responses of the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria during an interview session.

## **Political Discourse**

There exist different aspects of discourse such that it ranges from media to school to politics etc. In political discourse, which has to do with any “political actor” (Graber 1981 cited in Wilson 2001, p.398) – say, a politician, a government agency, a parliamentarian among others, language is a powerful means employed for communication and most especially to achieving a desired end. These “political actors” wield political power, which to Igwedibia (2016,p.253) “has to do with the position of being in charge over people’s behavior, making decisions and controlling of general resources of society.” For Paul Chilton (2004, p.4) “language and politics are intimately linked at a fundamental level” and he further adds that “political activity does not exist without the use of language (60). This is to say that language plays crucial role in discourses of political nature. According to Paul Chilton as cited in Igwedibia (2016,p.253), politics is “the art of governance and power” while language is “the universal capacity of humans in all societies to communicate.”

## **Cooperative Principle**

It is generally assumed that in conversational exchanges, conversationalists cooperate with each other. Gricean cooperative principle (CP) proposes that every conversation has a way in which to follow in order to be successful. The basic conversational principle that guides the pattern to follow for successful interlocution between interlocutors is the cooperative principle, which is why Leech opines that “the CP enables one participant in a conversation to communicate on the

assumption that the other participant is being cooperative” (1983, p. 82). According to Grice as cited in Thomas (1995, p.63) “without the assumption that the speaker is cooperating according to the CP, there is no mechanism to prompt someone to seek for another level of interpretation (of meaning)” Conversationalists cooperate on the basis of assumptions which the CP suggests. Cooperative principle, for Mey (2001, p.72) is important because “otherwise communication would be very difficult, and perhaps breakdown altogether”. The cooperative principle is stated as follows: “Make your conversation contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Grice, 1975,p.45).

According to this Gricean cooperative principle, four rules or maxims, which are conversationally based, that fall under the CP, are expected to be adhered to if the participants in interactional discourse are to cooperate with each other and these are called Gricean maxims: quality maxim, relation maxim, quantity maxim and manner maxim. These maxims specify what participants in interactional discourses have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational, co-operative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information (Levinson, 1983 p. 102).

**Quantity Maxim:** this maxim has it that participants should make their contributions as informative as required for the current purpose of exchange in the discourse. It proposes that not too much nor too little of information should be provided, rather the exact or right information needed for that exchange should be provided.

**Quality Maxim:** this proposes the truthfulness of one’s contribution in an exchange. Here, participants in discourse should not say what is believed to be untrue or what the evidence for is lacking.

**Maxim of Relation:** proposes being relevant in making contributions for exchanges. That is, participant in discourse should provide information that is relevant to the topic or subject matter of the discourse in question.

**Manner Maxim:** this maxim proposes perspicuity. In any discourse exchange, this maxim says that information that is contributed should be clear, brief and orderly. Thus, the information provided should be that characteristically marked by clarity, orderliness and brevity. When all the maxims are observed in interaction discourses, no implicature will be generated but when the maxims are not observed, conversational implicature will be generated.

### **Conversational Implicature**

In making communicative contributions, speakers leave out most information implicit which invariably leads to other participant(s) making inferences to understand the meaning conveyed. This is the basis for implicature. In discourses, the non-observance or breaching of the conventional or prescribed rules or maxims of conversational cooperation: be truthful, be

informative, be perspicuous, be relevant, results in what Grice called conversational implicature. According to Kempson as cited in Ezeifeke (2018, p. 87) “conversational implicature of an utterance is, by definition, assumptions over and above the meaning of the sentence used which the speaker knows and intends that the hearer will make, in the face of an apparently open violation of the cooperative principle, in order to interpret the speaker’s sentences in accordance with the cooperative principle”.

Conversational implicature are results of breach or non-observance of the cooperation maxims for successful conversations. They are generated or triggered by model users exploiting a maxim (Fetzer 2011, p. 43). For Grundy, conversational implicature arises because the addressee assumes that the speaker is essentially cooperative, despite flouting (non-observance of) a maxim, and must therefore be intending to convey an implied meaning (2008, p.98). He further says that implicature must exist in order to save such utterances (that raised implicature) from simply appearing to be a faulty contribution to a conversation (2008,p.98). The non-observance of maxims could manifest in these forms: violation of maxim, flouting maxims, opting out of a maxim, infringing maxim and suspending maxim.

### **Violation of Maxim**

Maxim violation is one way of breaching the maxims for successful cooperation in interaction discourses. To violate maxims simply means to surreptitiously break the maxim which is unknown to the other participant. It is the intentional or deliberate act of participant(s) or a speaker to avoid adherence to the cooperation maxims in discourses. Thus, maxim violation is an ostentatious observance. According to Grice (1975,p.49) as quoted in Thomas “violation” is the ostentatious non-observance of a maxim. If a speaker violates a maxim, s/he “will be liable to mislead” (1995, p.72). Thomas further added that “violation means to say something that is ‘true’ in order to imply an untruth” (1995,p.74). When a speaker decides to be uncooperative, intentionally he/she fails to obey the maxims, thereby violating them. For Lambrou (2014, p.143), violating a maxim is a situation “whereby the hearer is not aware that what is said is breaking the maxim, for example, by a speaker lying or changing the topic, so that they may be misled as a result”. For Ezeifeke, “a speaker who lies, who deliberately sets out to deceive, or who gives information which he/she is not sure of, is violating all the maxims” (2018,p.84). It occurs when a speaker in a conversation intentionally tries to cause a certain level of confusion or misunderstanding to the addressee or when he or she wants to achieve a particular purpose in discourse (Mangilaya, 2020, p.199). According to Zebua, Rukini and Saleh (2017, p.104), speakers can be said to violate a maxim when they know that the hearer will not know the truth and will only understand the surface meaning of the words.

### **Flouting of Maxim**

A maxim is flouted “when a speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim, not with any intention of deceiving or misleading, but because the speaker wishes to prompt the hearer to look for a

meaning which is different, or in addition to, the expressed meaning” (Thomas, 1995,p.65). The participant in an interlocution does not deliberately want to flout the maxim but maxims are flouted in everyday conversation (Ezeifeka 2018,p.81) because flouting maxims happens when a speaker intentionally exploits cooperative maxims in the assumption that the hearer can decipher the underlying meaning in the discourse. When maxims are flouted, the hearer or addressee, on the one hand, is aware that the maxim is being broken, and also, there is additional meaning that the hearer has to interpret. Lambrou (2014, p.143), on the other hand, suggests the speaker “blatantly fails to observe a maxim at the level of what is said with deliberate intention of generating an implicature” (Thomas 1995,p.65).

### **Infringing on a Maxim**

To infringe a maxim is when a speaker who, with no intention of generating an implicature and with no intention of deceiving, fails to observe a maxim (Thomas 1995, p.74). “When a speaker unintentionally fails to observe a maxim because of such factors as lack of sufficient knowledge of the subject matter, old age dementia, nervousness, lack of attention, drunkenness and other such extraneous factors beyond the speaker’s control, a maxim is infringed on” (Ezeifeka 2018, p.85). This occurs when there is disability or problem in speaker’s utterance, even when intentionally the speaker does not want to make any implications. This usually manifests in situations where the speaker is a learner of a second language thus insufficiency in language competence and proficiency, or in children too. For Mbisike (2021,p.164), in infringing the maxims, the speaker or writer unintentionally fails to observe the maxims due to inadequate capabilities and weak comprehension of the language.

### **Suspending a Maxim**

When a maxim is suspended, the speaker has no obligation to observe the maxims and the hearers are not also expecting the maxims to be observed” (Ezeifeka, 2018,p.85). For Thomas (1995,p.77), suspension of maxims may be specific to culture or specific to particular events.

### **Opting out of a Maxim:**

This is when the speaker indicates unwillingness to cooperate in interaction discourse. In opting out of a maxim, the speaker chooses to unwillingly cooperate in the way the maxims require and equally states categorically the choice for not cooperating” (Ezeifeka 2018, p.85). For Thomas (1995,p.74), “a speaker opts out of a maxim by indicating unwillingness to cooperate in the way the maxim requires”. This unwillingness maybe as a result of the position of the speaker in public life so for some reasons (maybe legal or ethical according to Thomas 1995,p.74) she/he would not want to appear uncooperative or generate false implicature, or it may be that the speaker wishes to withhold some information that may hurt a third party if revealed. An instance

is a priest who hears confession in confidence of the penitent, he will not reveal the information he got for reasons not to hurt the penitent.

## **Data**

The data that was used for this study is the samples of eleven responses of President Muhammadu Buhari in the interview session that was done by the Channels TV on the fifth day of January 2022. This data was collected in order to explore some non-observance of maxims of cooperative principle as propounded by H.P. Grice which, according to him, is important in order to have successful interactional discourse.

## **Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive research design. This design was employed as it is considered most suitable and appropriate for this study. According to Chukwemeka (2002,p.34), descriptive research design is a “type of survey research that tries to unravel the essential elements or characteristics of any phenomenon... [and it is] concerned with the collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation of data for the purpose of describing practical beliefs, attitudes on-going process etc.”

A qualitative approach was adopted for data analysis in this study. This helped in interpreting the diverse meanings generated by implicatures in the responses of President Muhammadu Buhari.

## **Synopsis of President Muhammadu Buhari’s Interview with Channels TV**

The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, gives political speeches to Nigerians mostly when occasions call for such or he engages in discourses of political nature, say interviews. Political speech ranges from inaugural speeches, independence-day speeches and so on. This paper explores some of the comments/responses of President Muhammadu Buhari with Channels TV during an interview session.

The political discourse analyzed in this paper is the interview held by the Channels-TV on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2022, wherein the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was exclusively interviewed. It is the sole aim of this research to explore the language of politics, how the President communicates information to Nigeria by non-observance of the maxims of cooperative principles and the resultant effects created by such political discourse.

The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria does not usually grant interviews but he accepted to have one with the Channels-TV at a very significant point in time for the nation. One would see the significance of his grant to have an interview at such a strategic time in the political history of the nation and when his tenure as president is coming to a close. There will be a presidential election in 2023 and parties avail themselves of any opportunity to promote or

praise their political parties in order to win the minds of and have the votes of the masses. Such conclusion could be deduced from the aforementioned turn of events in the political affairs of the nation.

### **Application of the Theory of Cooperative Principles to Buhari's Interview with Channels TV on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2022**

The Gricean theory of cooperative principle, which suggests that in every human communication, interactants are expected to operate on the maxims of quality, quantity, manner and relation to have seamless interlocution was adopted for this study. Going against or not observing these maxims of "cooperation" in communicative discourse engenders conversational implicatures. Here, eleven utterance samples that showed non-adherence to the maxims of cooperative principles were brought to the fore in order to ascertain how politicians manipulate language to achieve their goals.

In order to have near error-free sentences/utterances, the researchers corrected some errors in the transcript of President Muhammed Buhari (PMB)'s responses as seen via the link <https://mandynews.com/buhari-interview-with-channelstv/> but not to alter the content or what his responses are. The contents of his responses were also supplemented with information from Businessday through this link: <https://businessday.ng/news/article/buharis-channels-television-interview/>

#### **Conversation Part One**

Interviewer: "In your new year's speech, and in that speech, you told, and I quote, the persistent insecurity in certain parts of the country may have threatened to unravel the incremental gains achieved. **Did you envisage the enormity of the task when you promise to tackle insecurity as president and commander-in-chief of our country?**"

PMB: "Well, I think you can recall that uh when I was campaigning right 2015 there were three fundamental issues: security, economy and fighting corruption and for Nigerians to be fair to this administration is to try to find out from the time we won the election in 2015 to now if the three promises we made: improving security improving the economy and trying to fight corruption well securing the country in the Northeast. If you ask anybody from Borno State, from Yobe State, from Adamawa State, there are a number of local governments about 18 that were in the hands of Boko Haram none of any(these) local governments now is strictly in the hands of Boko haram or Israel. So in that respect, we have done something the economy don't forget and I challenge so many people to go and check with the central bank, CBN or NNPC the production from 1999 to 2014 was 2.1 million dollars a day average production at the average

cost of a hundred American dollars per barrel. When we came somehow the militants were unleashed in the South-south, production went down to half a million dollars a day and I think as him by some fabulous coincidence the fries again collapse to about 37 dollars per barrel but look at which we did within the time frame and the resources available to us relative to the government we inherited.”

### **Analysis**

Here, it is clear that the president flouted the maxim of relation in the sense that his response was irrelevant or not direct as contained in the question, which asked him if he foresaw the enormity of the task he would be faced with as he tackles the problem of insecurity in the nation. While answering, he also brought in enormous information about his campaign in 2015, CBN and NNPC productions which were not contributing to what is required for the current exchange, which flouts the maxim of quantity. Also, the maxim of manner which projects brevity, clarity, orderliness and precision was flouted as the response of PMB was devoid of the quality of brevity, clarity and orderliness. Despite the flouting of maxims, it could be implied that the PMB has achieved success in his administration as he tried to justify this by making reference to CBN, NNPC and the issue of security that has been solved in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.

### **Conversation Part Two**

Interviewer: “Well, the economy and security are two very pressing areas, Mr. President, and I’m sure that over and over again we’ll keep going there, you talked about how the militants were unleashed some people would say that President Yar’Adua also faced that crisis, uh, when he ascended uh when he became president, and that was one of the reasons why he had to, you know, to come up with the amnesty program but I’ll take you back again to security; you’ve spoken about the progress we’ve made in the Northeast, and that is true the camps are being emptied; the Northwest continues to be of concern where we see bandits, uh, you know, unleashed in many parts of the Northwest, sometimes getting to the North-central of the country. **Would you say that we understand fully the problems we’re currently facing in terms of security in the Northwest?”**

PMB: “In the Northwest, is the same people, the same culture, stealing each other’s animals killing each other burning villages so I think the only language the unseen we discuss it thoroughly with the law enforcement agencies the service chiefs the inspector general of police is to go after uh you know the terrorists we level them terrorists and we are going to deal with them with such and I believe if you go to those constituencies in the Northwest and North-central within the last four weeks, there are improvements in the security that is improving the skills.”

### **Analysis**



The maxim of relation was flouted as seen that the responses of PMB were a deviance from the topic of the question. He was asked if the problem in terms of security being faced in the Northwest was fully understood in order to be able to proffer solution. Instead of responding in the affirmative or negative, he talked off-topic. Manner maxim on the other hand was flouted as clarity, orderliness and brevity were lacking in the response of the president which hindered cooperativeness. Quality maxim was flouted as there were no evidence in the utterance of PMB to support his statement that security has been improved in Northwest and North-central. Also evident is the little information given, with regard to the question of if the problem of security in the nation is fully understood, which is against the proposition of quantity maxim; to give the right amount of information. Despite the maxims flouting, the addressee understands that the problem is being understood which resulted in occasions of meeting to bring heads together and solve the problem.

### **Conversation Part Three**

Interviewer: “You asked we’re persisting on the economy just for a few minutes you announced an economic projection plan that of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in 10 years. **Mr. president where are we on that? How many people have been lifted out of poverty so far?**”

PMB: “I can’t tell you off-head, but I’m telling you that we are truly our Nigerian population 35 years and below are the majority and they don’t care how government is going to make it let them get job for them but I’ve just told you that land only 2.5 percent of the arable land would learn is being cultivated so we are going to turn our attention for the time remaining for us to agriculture but clear land machinery and so on probably unfortunately that is political problem in the South there is problem of land ownership very serious one is based on families and the ruling classes and so on but luckily uh mostly in the North that all land belongs to government so government can take areas and so on. So, I think for the time remaining for us for those 17 months will turn a lot to agriculture.”

### **Analysis**

The response of PMB showed maxims flouts. Maxim of quantity was flouted in that he gave too little information regarding the question of the number of Nigerians that has been hoisted from poverty in the nation and too much information on that (about arable lands, agriculture, land ownership) which he was not asked. He flouted the maxim of manner as he did not adhere strictly to the sub-maxims rules of brevity and clarity. He was asked a very clear question which was to state the total figure of Nigerians that have been helped to be out of being paupers. The maxim of relation was also flouted as it is overt that the president did not respond on-topic, which was to state where the country is in the economic projection to lift 100 million people of

Nigeria out of poverty, rather he deviated from the topic. The quality maxim was also flouted with regard to non-provision of the evidence to the data of the question that was asked, rather he provided the information on what is not in relation to the question. Inasmuch as maxims were flouted in the utterance of PMB, the underlying meaning conveyed through his response is that efforts are made to secure lands in order to reinvest in agriculture thereby creating employment and avenues to lift people from poverty.

#### **Conversation Part Four**

Interviewer: I'd like to take you up on the issue of the Chinese loans only because of your administration is the person the country is taking significant number of Chinese loans and there is a possibility that we might be seeing the nation taking more to fix and build the much needed infrastructure in the country. There are fears that will be many quarters with these loans that the nations the nation Nigeria might be being plunged into a dead trap. **Are we?**

PMB: Well, we take that where it is necessary. I told you now of something that I'm sure you know what it used to be between Lagos and the Iranian not to call to the rest of the country but we've got the Chinese to help us in the rain in the roads how can we turn that down? If we turn that down maybe between lakes inviting now you have to work so the Chinese are welcome anybody that is prepared to come and help us our infrastructure has told you the roads the rail and power will be welcome."

#### **Analysis**

Here, maxims of cooperative principles were flouted. The maxim of manner was flouted as in the comment of the PMB, the sub-maxims of brevity were not observed; he did not answer the question of if the country is being plunged into debt trap by his administration's Chinese loans. The quantity maxim was also flouted as little or no information was provided to the question he was asked about the fate of Nigeria with the persistent Chinese loans that his administration has got, while too much information was provided on road network construction which is irrelevant to the question, thus flouting the maxim of relation. In spite of the flouting of maxims of manner, quantity and relation, the speaker intends to convey the use of the Chinese loans which has become of great importance in the nation's road network creation especially in Lagos. But his response did not specify how and when the loans would be paid and what fate Nigeria has if it is not paid.

#### **Conversation Part five**

Interviewer: "Is it true, I mean because the farmers-herders this crisis um was one that was a big challenge a few years back and maybe a few months back as well it's come down somewhat but some people are attributing it to the seasons. They think it's about the weather and that now that

we're entering the peak of the dry season perhaps you could see a resurgence again. **Would you say that we have dealt with that problem once and for all or do you fear that it could rear its head again.**”

PMB: “We cannot do much about the weather but about the security, we have taken steps and we are seeing the results and we thank God for that. For the weather we can only pray and hope that the weather they are mentioning the climate change and so on Nigeria we are very susceptible to such issues because of our population and the size of the country population is the size of the country”

### **Analysis**

Maxim of relation was flouted because the response of PMB was not in any way related to the question of if the herders' resurgence has been tackled or it would rear its head again. Furthermore, the maxim of quantity was flouted as less information regarding the question, if there will be resurgence of herders or the problem has been dealt with, was given and too much that was irrelevant was provided. The manner maxim is flouted here because the response of PMB was neither brief nor orderly and it tilted towards ambiguity. Quality maxim was also flouted as there is no evidence to support the statement of PMB that there are steps which have been taken to solve the issue of security. The meaning implied from the maxim flout is that the issue of weather is beyond what could be solved as it is unpredictable but that of security would be and some measures are being put in place to tackle it.

### **Conversation Part Six**

Interviewer: “I made that reference to weather because you know people believe that when things get dry up North that's why you begin to see the herders coming down South and that's when we see the resurgence of the conflicts between farmers and herders so that's why I made reference to the weather. **Do you think that that has been sorted once and for all?**”

PMB: “Yes, the ministers of agriculture from out of AuduOgbe to Mahmood now one of the issues I discussed with them personally is to go and get the gazettes of fast republic especially from the Northern states there are certain rules and grazing grounds and the cattle rearers are confined to those areas those that go outside that one are arrested and farmers are encouraged to come and lay their claims if they don't have the money their cattle were sold and the farmers are settled so we said we have to go back to the system again to try and make sure that we prepare the grazing areas, astronomers, windmills you know even veterinary developments (departments) so that the herders don't stray into people's farms and into the towns and so on so really we are working on that”

### **Analysis**

Here, maxims were violated. The maxim of quantity was violated as too much information was provided with regard to the question of whether the issue of farmers-herders conflict would resurface. The manner maxim was also violated with non-adherence to brevity and clarity. PMB was not orderly in his response which also contributed in not being concise in his response. There exists speaker's intended meaning which the addressee implies. From the responses, it could be inferred that certain measures are being set, such as rules of cattle grazing, reporting of damages made by herders on farmers' lands etc., to ensure that the issues of conflict will be sorted out.

### **Conversation Part Seven**

Interviewer: "The concern here, Mr. President, is finding a lasting solution. **What in your mind do you think can help bring a lasting solution to these issues: credit crime (herder's crises) crises and issues of banditry?"**

PMB: "There is a problem of culture and from our culture, you have to study it to understand it the life of nomad herder though a lot of kids they depend entirely on them they sell the milk they sell the animals to pay tax and so on and by saying sugar or salt or something is the entire way of life so if those cattle who are taken away from them they normally become very wild because the only thing they know is a cultural problem and the way we it starts from the bottom upwards the leadership to make sure that the grazing areas and the water points are secure to them they don't have to go through some people's farm to go to the water points one say you have got 50 cows after eating grass they will just head where to drink"

### **Analysis**

Maxims were violated here. The maxim of quantity was violated. There is evidence of too much information, that does not necessarily contribute to the question asked, that was given by PMB. On the other hand, this too much information further violates the maxim of manner as his response did not observe briefness to aid current exchanges. Out of the PMB response, the utterance that reads "...leadership to make sure that the grazing areas and the water points are secure to them..." is relevant to the question of what he has in mind as a lasting solution to the issues of banditry and herders' crises, therefore other utterances could be said to not be contributive for the exchange. Inasmuch as maxims were violated, the speaker's meaning of trying to justify the actions of the cattle rearers is implied and it is from the understanding of the way of life of the nomads that the solution to the issues of banditry and herders' crises could be solved.

### **Conversation Part Eight**

Interviewer: "Even governors, for example, suggested that we need to bomb these bandits in their forest. **Are you looking in that option uh a full military assault on them because what is on the minds of an average person in the Northwest is to see a situation where these**

## **bandits are taken out totally? The kidnapping, the killings of innocent Nigerians in that in that region”**

PMB: “Well, I told you what we have done. We met at least uh four times with the sub’s chiefs and other law enforcement agencies each meeting taking at least four hours we have discussed thoroughly what to do with the situation luckily I have a military background from the civil war now so we discuss on what we understand and we try to secure and make it safe for the leadership at communities level because it’s very important the best intelligence you get it from the local leadership because they know who is who in their areas of responsibilities you have to you have to talk to them but you must make sure they are safe because the bandits or whatever you call them they can be a source of insecurity to them or to their members of the family and you are very conscious of that but I ask you to please try and check within the last six weeks and so that is an improvement in the north west and north central”

### **Analysis**

The response of PMB was not relevant to the question asked as such violates the maxim of relation. His response was very far from the question of if he would permit full military assaults on bandits. He rather responded on a different topic by mentioning his meetings with sub chiefs and the duration of the meetings and also his military background which are not in any way related to the questioned posed to him. Too little information regarding the question was given by PMB which violates the maxim of quantity. Quality maxim was also violated in that there was no evidence to support the claims of PMB that he held meetings with sub-chiefs and to support the improvement in North-west and North-central that he mentioned, for instance. More so, his response was ambiguous which violates the maxim of manner. In as much as there is non-observance of maxims which came in the form of maxims violation, the addressees could deduce the meaning of President Muhammadu Buhari’s utterances which were implied. The implicature is that he would not want a full military assault of the bandits rather he has started working hand-in-hand with local chiefs and sub-chiefs in order to facilitate the tracking of such bandits since they are familiar with people in the territories or constituencies.

### **Conversation Part Nine**

**Interviewer: As much as I wanted us to move on from the economy and when I was asking the question about the Chinese loans one we wonder where the nation was when you took over office in 2015: our debt stock at that time was about 12 trillion now it is about 32 trillion, inflation rate was about 90 it is now sitting about over 15 percent, unemployment rate was about 8.9 percent it is now 33.28, exchange rate was about 197 nah to a dollar is way over naira to a dollar so people will look back economically speaking and say look um**

**before you took over office some of these indicators were fair and now the figures are not friendly at all.”**

PMB: Well, I’m not sure how correct the calculations are but all I know is that we have to allow people to get access to the farms as I said we just have to go back to the land we have to go back to the land what we have done so far as I said we have achieved some successes and people ought to measure our successes vis-a-vis the problems when we started you have given your figures as you as you calculated but the important thing is this that uh the farms that you know produce uh machinery and so on tractors and so on we have to use the infrastructure and we have identified the infrastructure we need we have to make the real writing we have to make the roads and if you have listened to the minister works and housing how much of the roads we have built and rehabilitated and how much of the rail we have done and if you talk to the minister of transportation the planned transportation from Lagos to Ibadan then to the east then from Port Harcourt to Maiduguri and then from here to Kano and even up to up to Niger. I think we need to appreciate what we have done with what we have within the time we have been here um maybe in 2014 and so on. I told you from 2014 to back to 1999 how much we are earning and the problem now petroleum industry is becoming more complicated and unreliable let me put it that way.”

### **Analysis**

Maxims of cooperative principle were violated in the responses of PMB to the interviewer. The quantity maxim was violated as PMB did not give the exact information to the data about the state of the nation’s economy which were presented to him. He rather dwelt on the need to go back to agriculture, and made unnecessary reference to 2014 to 1999 state of the nation’s economy in comparison to his administration 2015 to 2022. His response was also irrelevant to the interviewer’s statement, thus violating the maxim of relation. He deliberately did not adhere to the maxim of relation as he tried to praise the success of his administration without doing justice to the question he was asked. The manner maxim was also violated in the sense that the statements of PMB was not brief, clear nor orderly. The implicature here is that the PMB administration has been working given his points on road networks creation, for instance. Also, his response implies that the state of the nation’s economy in his administration is way better than what there was from 2014 to 1999 which means they have success to account for.

### **Conversation Part Ten**

Interviewer: Mr. President as we wind down now I don’t know I think that sometimes you must sit and reflect about when you know you tried many times to be leader of this country and you succeeded in the fourth attempt and I’m sure that you had your goals for this country when you had, when you ran for office the many times you offered yourself um when you think and look at where Nigeria is and the way forward. **Do you fear for this country? Do you fear for our oneness and our unity?”**

PMB: No, I don't. I don't, because to be frank with you, from 15th January 1966 I have been in all the trouble in this country including being in detention for more than three years. I think Nigerians, they make noise. I think to get better deal but they know that we are better together than separate. I sincerely believe in that they are just yeah they just make noise so that they can get better ideas."

### **Analysis**

Here, PMB flouted the maxim of quantity that he provided too much information to the question he was asked; information that was not needed such as his time of detention. In the process of giving too much information, he also flouted the maxim of manner which upholds briefness and orderliness as part of its sub-maxims PMB continuously repeated pieces of information he had given which resulted in maxim of manner flout. Although maxims of cooperative principles were flouted, there is meaning that underlies the utterance of PMB. By his response that Nigeria is better off united than separated, he would not want any situation to give grant of secession to any group or tribe in the nation. More so, the nation will hold her presidential election and he would not want any state to break out in his administration. Thus, he tried to defend the importance of the togetherness and his sweat or work towards it by mentioning his time of detention.

### **Conversation: Part Eleven**

Interviewer: **"You don't have any favourite for 2023 in your party?"**

PMB: No, I wouldn't because he may be eliminated if I mentioned. I better keep it secret."

### **Analysis**

It is clear that the non-observance strategy adopted by the PMB is that of opting out of maxim and the reason for the unwillingness to cooperate is evidently presented in the structure his utterance took, which is not to hurt the person or cause the person's death by revealing his identity. The implicature from this is that the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has a candidate who he would want to vie for the presidency position in the forthcoming presidential election that will be in 2023.

### **Conclusion**

In every conversation, it is generally assumed that the interactants operate on principle of cooperation in order to have successful conversation in any discourse-specific contexts. The Gricean Cooperative Principle upholds this and gives four super-maxims with submaxim(s) each that govern cooperation in conversation, but interlocutors are bound to ignore or not observe them this is prevalent in all human discourses. In political discourses, it is believed that "political actors" do not always abide by these maxims, and this generates implicatures. This study on

political discourse revealed that the maxims of cooperation were flouted, violated and opted out, which invariably generates implicatures. Thus, maxims of cooperation are non-observed or participants fail to observe them at times in their conversational discourses.

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