

**LEXICO-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF OBASANJO'S LETTER
TO PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI, THE WAY OUT:
A CLARION CALL FOR COALITION FOR NIGERIA
MOVEMENT**

Ezekiel Augustine Hammangabdo
Department of English and Literary Studies
Taraba State University, Jalingo
Ezekielaugustine2018@gmail. Com

ABSTRACT

The research is an investigation of the lexico-semantic analysis of Obasanjo's letter to President Mohammadu Buhari, The Way Out; a clarion call for coalition for Nigeria Movement. A simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. The researcher hinged the study on lexical field theory in the first phase of the analysis then, used the semantic theory of Truth Conditional Semantic to ascertain the validity of the matters pointed out by the former president and finally the componential analysis approach in order to look at the features of every lexemes in analyzing the letter. The researcher discovered that Obasanjo as a true statesman has the sole credibility to write in a secret or open to any leader that abused his/her office. Just as the letter is in accordance with the situation of the country at that time, it has been observed that words used in the letter are words of wisdom. Therefore, the researcher recommended that Nigeria is a multiethnic and multi-religious country with over 200,000,000 million people; one man's brain cannot suffice the demand of the masses. Therefore presidents and leaders should adhere to these types of letters without minding the writer's status. Heed the advice given by others who can positively contribute to the act of governance. Also, National interest should



surpass party interest so that the targeted development and plans would be achieved.

Key words: Lexico-Semantics, Lexical, Semantics, Open-Letter.

INTRODUCTION

Semantics deal with meaning. At the lexico-semantic level, one looks at the lexical choices made by a writer or speaker. Here, words can be chosen for their denotative, connotative and other dimensions of meanings. Look at this line: “But tomorrow cannot be consoled.” The above line is taken from Yeibo’s *Maiden Lines*. Syntactically, i.e., in terms of grammar, the line is normal. The sentence begins with ‘but’, giving the assumption that it contrasts with the idea that precedes it. But if one looks at the sentence semantically, “tomorrow” is not an animate thing that can be consoled; it is only humans that can be “consoled” or not consoled. Making “tomorrow” to go with “consoled” creates some effect at this level.

Lexical semantics (also known as lexico-semantics), is a subfield of linguistic semantics. The units of analysis in lexical semantics are lexical units which include not only words but also sub-words or sub-units such as affixes and even compound words and phrases. Lexical units make up the catalogue of words in a language, the lexicon. Lexical semantics looks at how the meaning of the lexical units correlates with the structure of the language or syntax. This is referred to as syntax-semantic interface. Lexico-semantics is a sub-branch of Semantics that deals with the study of words, meanings and the relatedness of lexical items in syntagmatic structures. Words either denote physical and abstract things or connote images in the real and imagined worlds. Yule, (17). Neologism, semantic and metaphoric extension, conversion, broadening and layering, narrowing or semantic attrition, semantic shift and drift and semantic reversal are the major lexico semantic processes in English Akmajian, Farmer, Dermer & Harnish,.(17); Aitchison, (17); Crystal, (17).



Lexico-semantic analysis level is concerned with the representation of the semantics of lexical items, hence lexical semanticists are interested in what words mean, why they mean, how they are represented in the speaker's mind and how they are used in text and discourse. The term lexicon is the collection of lexical items in a given language, thus lexemes are defined as linguistic items with their own meaning that can be considered from different perspectives Baldwin, (6). According to Jackendoff Foundation of Language. *Brain, meaning, Grammar and Evolution* (447). The item receives a range of contextual interpretations through the interaction with specific conceptual factors. Thus, meaning can be realized in different lexemes of semantic fields. Also, Semantics focuses on the meaning of words. It is the study of meaning system of language that may deal with the way words and sentences are belonged to objects and processes in the world, and the way words are related to each other in terms of synonymy, entailment and contradiction.

Basically, Lexico-Semantic level is the study of the meaning of words either connotative or denotative such as diction, choice of words and figure of speech. In this context, Leech (10) and Lyons (55), studied the meaning of words, phrases, sentences and their diverse types differentiating conceptual, connotative, emotive and other meanings. For Leech, there are different types of meaning as associative and conceptual meaning. This type of meaning is related to the dictionary definition of a word, or the exact meaning. Leech has defined conceptual meaning as "the widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistic communication..." Leech (10). Associative meaning is a type of meaning at 'the deep level' which relate to the content of a word or a sentence. It is related to subjectivity and stylistics.

Chief Olusegun Mathew Okikiola Aremu Obasanjo, GCFR, Ph. D. is a former Nigerian army general from the Yoruba clan of the south-western part of Nigeria. He was a career soldier before serving twice as his nation's head of state. He served as military ruler from 13th February 1976 to 1st October 1979. He also served as



a democratically elected president from 29 May 1999 to 29 May 2007.

Nigeria's political system is becoming bizarre along with controversial scenario for the world analysts to look upon and decipher. Each regime is introduced through many issues of national conscience, but at the midpoint of democratic journey, issues of self-expression, failing of promises, economic and socio-cultural problems here and there, ethno-religious rampages from every angle arise, as stated by the former president Olusegun Obasanjo to the former president Good Luck Jonathan in a letter titled: *'Before it is Too Late'* and the incumbent President, Muhammadu Buhari with a title: *The Way Out: A Clarion Call For Coalition For Nigeria Movement*. In his letter under study, Obasanjo did not hide his attention to go all against the incumbent to work against his return to office in 2019 despite the constitutional right. He accused Buhari on ten count charges ranging from poor performance of the government, instant poverty, insecurity, poor economic management, nepotism, Gross dereliction of duty, condonation and lack of future hope for the citizens, lack of international cohesion and widening inequality.

In respect to this research, certain problems that prelude the writing of such open letter to Nigerian leader, with solemn specification and concentration to "The way Out: " *A Clarion call For Coalition For Nigerian Movement*" sent to President Muhammadu Buhari on January 24th, 2018 by the former president Olusegun Obasanjo. This letter encompasses the previous and current problems facing the country. But the question is, was Obasanjo not among the former leaders of this country? The answer is definitely yes, but what makes him writes is necessity. As a true statesman and patriotic citizen of this great country, Obasanjo realized that most of the leaders now are not objective to their constitutional duties rather they focus on different issues of their personal interest. He is much concerned about the future of the present and younger generations in the country. This makes him not keep quiet as he stated, using the first person pronoun for more emphasis in the first page of the



letter under study. It was felt that most Nigerians had lost hope in the country and that this cannot be reversed. Besides, there are efforts of the saboteurs especially with regard to the fuel scarcity that marred the Christmas period as part of the recorded consequences during Buhari's led administration. Other problems as lamented by Odeleke Arinze are; *"insecurity, the rise of Dollar, power, etc."*

Therefore, the socio economic development of any society is intemperately depending on the nature, character and patterns of its administrative leadership. This literature focused on the challenges of Nigeria as mentioned by the former president Obasanjo in the letter sent to President Muhammadu Buhari, January 24, 2018. These are: Insecurity, Corruption, Non-adherence to the rule of law, Immunity to the prosecuting political office holders, Pervasive poverty and massive unemployment, Poor performance of the government. From all indications, most Nigerian leaders faced the afore-mentioned problems as raised by the former president Obasanjo.

That explain why the letter of the former president has become controversial, if the regime has not performed creditably well, Obasanjo's letter would have received national endorsement. Based on the above, Obasanjo's letter is in line with national cohesion in one part and so egoistic in the other. From an unusual quarter came an advice to President Buhari to look beyond merely justifying the achievements of his administration and rather address the issues raised by ex-President Obasanjo in his letter. The opposition PDP said this while reacting to the trending news. According to the party, *"there is need for Buhari and his handlers to consider the mood of Nigerians before deciding whether to seek re-election or not"*

This research work views the rising and most pressing issues in the country despite their existence in the country since the inception of democracy as a system of government. Different leaders confronted different problems during their tenure of service. Gradually, the problems are escalating from one regime to

the other, leading to the disintegration of the country instead. According to the letter, **The Way Out:**

‘*A Clarion Call for the Coalition for Nigeria Movement*’ written by the former president Obasanjo to President Muhammadu Buhari, states that the incapacitation of Buhari steered the country into the following problems: Poor performance of the government, Rampant poverty, High level of insecurity, Poor economic management, Nepotic appointment, Gross dereliction of duty, Condonation, if not outright encouragement of it, Lack of progress and hope for the future dynamic, Widening inequality, Incessant killings, Lack of team work.Etc.

The above mentioned are among the serious problems itching the development of this country which were lexically and semantically analyzed in this research work. There are many letters written by the former president Obasanjo but this study centered on the lexico-semantic analysis of the letter titled: **The Way Out: A Clarion Call For Coalition For Nigeria Movement**, written by president Olusegun Obasanjo to president Muhammadu Buhari. On the 24th January, 2018. Therefore, the work dwelt on lexical relations like synonym, antonym, hyponymy etc. and other semantic features within words, phrases, clauses and sentence level

METHODOLOGY

A simple random sampling method was adopted for the study. The researcher used the lexical field theory in the first phase of the analysis then, the semantic theory of *Truth Conditional Semantic* to ascertain the validity of the matters pointed out by the former president and finally the componential analysis approach in order to look at the features of every lexemes in analyzing the letter. Therefore, qualitative method is used to describe the lexico-semantic variations gathered and to explain their psychosociolinguistic underpinnings. Qualitative research is concerned with individual’s own accounts of attitudes, motivations and behaviour. The qualitative approach is best suitable for exploratory, attitudinal, historical and linguistic studies that



examine causal processes at the level of the intentional, self-directing and knowledgeable actor. Omorogiuwa, (206).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher hinged his research work on the Lexical Field Theory as his theoretical model. This theory was introduced on March 12, 1931 by the German linguist Jose Trier. He argued that words acquired their meaning through their relationships to other words within the same word-field. An extension of the sense of one word narrows the meaning of neighboring words, with the words in a field fitting neatly together like a mosaic. If a single word undergoes a semantic change, then the whole structure of the lexical field changes. The lexical field is often used in English to describe terms further with use of different words. Trier's theory assumes that lexical fields are easily definable closed sets, with no overlapping meanings or gaps.

The research is also germane with a Semantic Field Theory which proposes that a group of words with interrelated meanings can be categorized under a larger conceptual domain. This entire entity is thereby known as a semantic field. Semantic field theory does not have concrete guidelines that determine the extent of semantic relations between lexemes. The abstract validity of the theory is a subject of debate knowing the meaning of a lexical item therefore means knowing the semantic entailments the word brings with it. However, it is also possible to understand only one word of a semantic field without understanding the other related words. A semantic field can thus be very large or very small, depending on the level of contrast being made between lexical items.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

If there is anything Nigerians should have learnt from the letters of General Olusegun Obasanjo to the nation's presidents and Heads of states is that, one need to carefully read between the lines and be cautious. This is because Obasanjo's letters have a history of being some sort of omen for the government of the day. Experts



analyze Obasanjo's "deadly" letters. Experts were almost unanimous in their views that no matter how patriotic Obasanjo may be, but he also may be seeking for "notice". According to Barrister B.M. Salihu,

"The truth is that Obasanjo has lost relevance and that is why he is making all these noise, didn't he know these things earlier that he chose to speak only now? He is a master in double speak, was he not the one who asked Gowon what he forgot in the Presidential Villa but later on came to contest?"

In his analysis, Hassan A. Hassan, Dean, Faculty of General Studies and Head of Mass Communication Department at the Federal Polytechnic Bauchi, said,

"To be fair, Obasanjo is one of the most patriotic Nigerians around. You know he was known as a statesman of international repute after his first tenure."

Hassan, who is also the Bauchi state Chairman of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, however makes lamentation during Jonathan's regime that:

"The man has lost that privilege because he woefully failed to address the issues he is now accusing Jonathan of, in the eight years he held sway."

According to Mr. Pam Henry Dung, a Psychology lecturer with the Plateau State University said,

"My basic impressions are, first of all, President Jonathan will not let Obasanjo meddle so much into his government any more. So Obasanjo is disgruntled about that. "Secondly, Obasanjo does not want anyone to beat his record of being the longest served president of the country. Above all, Obasanjo does not have the credibility to write such a letter. His words should be taken with a pinch of salt."



In his submission, erudite constitutional lawyer, Malam Yusuf Ali (SAN) said, he believes that former president Obasanjo's letter to President Jonathan should be seen as a catalyst for development. According to him, past leaders must continue to speak up on national issues. He said,

"All those who have been privileged to rule Nigeria must continue to speak up on national issues, whether the incumbent is performing or not. That is the way to ensure that the country attains its greatness."

Yusuf added, the Obasanjo and his letters in, history of "Nigeria" though many Nigerians see Obasanjo as a "wrong messenger", his messages have always struck a chord. It took a letter or comments from Obasanjo, to different administrations, for the nation to come to terms with the need for a change of guard at either the Dodan Barracks in Lagos, or the Presidential Villa in Abuja. For Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the first executive president of Nigeria, it came in 1983. For the apostle of 'War Against Indiscipline', General Muhammadu Buhari, it came in 1985, and for the first and only military president of the nation, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, there are stories to tell from his 1989 and 1993 experiences with Obasanjo. Even the fearless General, Sani Abacha had his share, with Obasanjo's "attack" in 1995. He did not spare the gentle Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2010 either. Apart from having the privilege of ruling the country on two different occasions (1976-1979 and 1999-2007), the former president has remained the most active Nigerian leader after exit from office. Obasanjo, in an 18-page open letter, titled: *Before It Is Too Late*, written on Monday, December 2, gives 10 reasons for making the "letter of appeal public". He accused President Goodluck Jonathan of ruling the nation as a tyrant, training snipers, driving the country to the edge of an abyss by allowing corruption to thrive and of favouritism and sowing discord in the military. Obasanjo wrote,



"The roles of the military and the security agencies should be held sacrosanct in the best interest of the nation. Again, let not history repeat itself. You should learn the lesson of history and please do not take Nigeria and Nigerians for granted".

The uproar generated by this letter to Jonathan may not have mattered much if not for the antecedents of such previous letters from the former president. Obasanjo has a penchant for talking down the government of the day, with his letters appearing to play the role of a 'sniper', as such governments become history shortly after receiving them. Obasanjo's letters or comments have almost always led to the sacking of the objects of his attacks. The former president told everyone who cared to listen, that Abiola was not the messiah the nation needed. The tragedy of the statements was that Babangida was forced to step aside and Abiola never became president. Obasanjo's attack did not spare the late Gen. Sani Abacha's administration. The Arewa House keynote address condemning the Abacha regime and a BBC interview, in which he accused Abacha's government of spending like a drunken sailor, are things Nigerians will not forget in a hurry. Generals fight the last war and that was a mistake. The no-nonsense Abacha sent him to jail for allegedly participating in a *coup* plot. He was lucky he didn't get the death penalty. Again, he went after the late President Musa Yar'Adua's administration. A day after leaving office in 2007, Obasanjo was said to have written to President Yar'Adua, his successor, in a letter dated May 30, 2007, trying to tutor him on what to do. *As you know*, for the next few months, perhaps years, your government will be regarded as being in the penumbra of the Obasanjo regime given the situation that brought you into office. Against this background you must toil to carve out a unique identity for yourself and administration. To do this, you must choose wisely your vision and the folks in your cabinet to drive the vision. After seeing Yar'Adua in hospital, Obasanjo went public to hint at the life-threatening health challenges confronting the leader, setting in motion at a very frenetic pace a sequence of events that led to the emergence of Jonathan as acting president.

Unlike in his letters to other presidents, Obasanjo had, in his recent letter to Jonathan, craved his indulgence to share the contents of this letter, in the first instance, with General Ibrahim Babangida and General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who, on a number of occasions in recent times,

"I have shared with me their agonizing thoughts, concerns and expressions on most of the issues. I have raised in this letter concerning the situation and future of our country."

This is why it has been suggested in some quarters that Nigerians should collectively ignore the messenger, but take the message, especially as serious issues bordering on national security were raised in Obasanjo's letter to President Jonathan. Because Obasanjo's letter raised very serious issues against the person and office of the president, it has become imperative for the presidency or the president to come out and address the Nigerian public on some of the issues, for the sake of posterity. (Published by Katherine Baffour, Views: 553 Category: Politics. 2013/12/21).

In the Naija.ng report, the critics Oladele Hakeem two years ago, states that

"The critics of President Muhammadu Buhari think he is a disaster to the country. They see no good in him. They believe he has seriously under-performed in the one year he took over the mantle of leadership. How true these are, the different national problems on ground tell the story"

On the other hand,

"Die-hard fans of the former military ruler believe he is the best thing that could ever have happened to Nigeria at this time. They based their argument on the



fact that he is insulated from corruption and all forms of corrupt practices”

The Buharists also say their hero inherited a 16-year collapsed building from the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Therefore, he needs more time. The truth about all these *for* and *against* arguments is that President Buhari will become a hero or a villain at the end of 2019 if the five major monsters threatening Nigeria’s unity are not tackled headlong. These monsters according to Odeleke Hakeem are, “Corruption/bad leadership, Battered economy and unemployment, Sectional agitations/regional uprising, Religious intolerance, Tribal sentiment. The former speaker house of representative and the serving governor of Sokoto state, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal in his decamping speech states that,

“It is because I am convinced that no nation can thrive while there is inequity and bad governance; because I am saddened by the fact that lethargy, incompetence and sustained denial of obvious leadership missteps have become the major raw materials with which the Nigerian State is being run today; because I am unwilling to be part of frightful conspiracy against the cohesion of the Nigerian State, Nigerian youths and peoples; because I am unable to feel at ease in the face of a progressively divided nation and, above all, because I am totally unable to reconcile myself to a national leadership that offers no redeeming moral beacons that I am here with you today; to announce the withdrawal of my membership of the All Progressives Congress and return to the People’s Democratic Party”

“I speak to you today with a mixture of sadness and relief because I did not expect that the APC, which promised so much when the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) stood under the sway of impunity, could not

maintain or manage whatever good it inherited. It has also not broken new grounds in any positive sense but has instead reached historically unprecedented heights of impunity in all manner of vices far above and beyond the challenges which made some of us to leave the PDP about four years ago to join others to form the APC. The party has brazenly turned itself into a sanctuary for the corrupt and a machine for rigging and for the rape of democracy". Wale Odunsi, on August 1, 2018

Not only the Sokoto state governor, there were many prominent politicians and stakeholders that made similar lamentations on the current administration. Based on the Tambuwal's speech, it is realized that the internal party problems may affect the development of a nation. In a One-day Extra Ordinary Summit of Leaders and Elders of Nigeria convened by the Northern Elders Forum (NEF), Afenifere, Ohaeneze Ndigbo, Pan Niger Delta Forum, states that,

"the former President while taking a swipe at the government, said that Nigeria, in recent times, has not been so divided along religious and regional lines as at today with what he termed, inexcusable killings and devastating poverty and with government's wringing hands and apparently incompetent to stem the tide except giving one unrighteous and unacceptable justification after the other"

Meanwhile, Elders and leaders from the Six- geo political zones of the country have accused the government of lacking the capacity to arrest the drift towards a state of anarchy that looms in the country as a result of the security challenges in the country. The leaders and Elders who noted that, there appears to be palpable government complicity in the killings going on around the country, said however that the killings have claimed 3,500 lives in 2017, a figure that could be much higher in 2018. The



leaders from the North, East, South and Middle Belt at the end of the summit have resolved to put in place a template on the issue of Federalism and Restructuring in Nigeria. Speaking further, former President Olusegun Obasanjo who was represented by the former governor of Osun State, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, said *“That the time has come for the nation to be saved”*

The Chairman of the Northern Elders Forum, (NEF), Professor Ango Abdullahi in response to the letter sent to him by the former president Obasanjo, states thus:

“When you kindly paid me a visit a couple of weeks ago, we deliberated on the danger to our democracy, our common identity, our commonality of purpose. Our dream and our unity in diversity. We lamented the harm that the present Administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, by his action and inaction, has done and is doing to our commonwealth and our common heritage “Nigeria in recent times, has not been so divided along religious and regional lines as at today with inexcusable killings and devastating poverty and with Government’s wringing hands and apparently incompetent to stem the tide except giving one unrighteous and unacceptable justification after the order. The obvious indication is that the Government is seemingly confused and has got to the end of its tether and the nation is being left decisively and perilously to drift. Earlier last week, I noted in a speech some undesirable elements being allowed and being introduced to our democracy by this Administration. If these are not stopped, they could be the death knell of our democracy”

At the end of the meeting which lasted several hours, the Leaders and Elders of the Northern Elders Forum (NEF), Afenifere, Ohaeneze Ndigbo, Pan Niger Delta Forum, in a communiqué read by Professor Banji Akintoye. (*Government*



confused written by Obasanjo. Vanguard news, Category: politics July 19, 2018:13.). More to that, in a commentary of Obasanjo's letter to Buhari, Yakassai and others urged Buhari to heed advice. In response to the letter, the federal government, through its information, culture and tourism minister, Alhaji Lai Mohammed described the letter and advice as distractions to the ongoing move of the government to address the enormous challenges bequeathed by previous administrations, insisting that the government is doing well and recorded many achievements in various sectors of governance. Responding to the Federal Government's response, elder statesman, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai, said, "President Buhari's desperation for power would not allow him to listen to voice of reason at this critical period"

Yakasai, who noted that Obasanjo has not done anything new, but only playing with emotions, said: "Obasanjo's letter was an expression of disappointment in Buhari's administration and it summarizes the feelings of Nigerians and non-Nigerians".

The Allied Congress Party of Nigeria, (ACPN) National Chairman, Alhaji Galadima, said:

"The advice of former President Olusegun Obasanjo to President Buhari not to contest in 2019 is apt and sincere, "Chief Obasanjo is a former Nigerian president known for his truth and bluntness"

The National Secretary of Action Democratic Party (ADP), James Okoroma, said,

"Obasanjo was right in his submissions and has set the stage for a new Nigeria. "The damage caused by the Buhari's Government is enormous and we must endeavour to rebuild our country. "The former President made it clear in his statement that the Buhari's government is a monumental failure. "According to Obasanjo, Buhari cannot be credited with any achievement in any sector: Security,



education, economy, national cohesion and infrastructural development”

Mba Ekpezu Ukwani, SAN, criticized President Buhari over bad governance that,

“Obasanjo spoke the minds of Nigerians and at the right time. His words: “It was something that has been bordering him and a lot of Nigerians for a long time. The statement was apt, appropriate and direct to the point. Ninety eight per cent of Nigerians know what is going on and any person who thinks that the statement is not appropriate in the circumstance, is misguiding himself. We welcome his statement” This is not something that the APC or the President should take as a careless statement, it is a statement that they need to reflect upon and know that Nigerians can no longer be taken for granted.” Ukwani criticized President Buhari for not giving Nigerians the governance they expected. “It is the most barbaric and illegal act that a country and government should condone the killings of Nigerians by Fulani herdsmen”. Muhammad & Uchechukwu(24).

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has commended former President Olusegun Obasanjo for speaking out against the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. In a statement on Wednesday by its media and publicity secretary, Emma Powerful, IPOB hailed Mr. Obasanjo’s statement, saying it came at a time it was needed most in the country.

“We support Obasanjo for his timely intervention because at a time of national crisis and with people losing their lives all across the Middle Belt and Southern Nigeria, anybody discussing partisan politics under such an atmosphere of mass misery is not fit to be regarded as a human being talk less a leader”“What Obasanjo said is the clearest



endorsement of the philosophy of our leader and prophet of our time”

“Obasanjo had spoken the truth and he should be applauded for it. The shameless endorsement of Buhari for 2019 by these bunch of undignified individuals under the banner of Igbo leaders have showcased to the world what a bunch of delinquent inconsequential vain glorious misery merchants”

Those hungry and insatiable APC; men that visited Aso Rock to endorse Buhari for 2019 under the banner of Igbo leaders should all cover their collective faces in shame” “They have brought shame and dishonour to Igboland by openly embracing a mass murderer and genocidist,” According to them, “Buhari has nothing to offer apart from misery and premature death,” the proscribed secessionist group said. IPOB speaks on Obasanjo’s letter Buhari Published by Justina Felix, January 24, 2018. The All Progressives Congress (APC), Scandinavia chapter says the letter written by former President Olusegun Obasanjo to President Muhammadu Buhari is good for the nation’s democracy. Mr Lawal Ayoola, chairman of the party in the Scandinavia, told newsmen on the telephone from Gothenburg, Sweden that, “Obasanjo should be commended for saying his mind” (*Obasanjo’s letter to Buhari good for democracy*) – APC On January 26, 2018 1:54 p min News Comments:

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

There are different ways to approach the problems of meaning, since meaning is related to many different functions of language. The meaning of words in a language are interrelated and they are defined in parts by their relations with other words in the language and analyzed in the same semantic domain, hence words can be classified according to shared and differentiating features. Breaking down the sense of a word into its minimal distinctive features, componential analysis of meaning can be a useful approach in the study of the meaning of the letter under study,



particularly in determining the meaning of a lexeme. Although componential analysis has some difficulties and limitations in its application, it is still used in modern linguistics. Therefore, this chapter encompasses lexical relations and its subtypes like synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, hyponyms and polysemy etc. Within the linguistic sphere of text under study. It has also covered the semantic field and techniques, and other linguistics paradigms like deixis, maxims etc. Nida, Eugene A. *Componential Analysis of Meaning*. Belgium: Mouton. 1975. Lexical analysis is a concept that is applied to computer science in a very similar way it is applied to linguistics. Essentially, lexical analysis means grouping a stream of letters or sounds into sets of units that represent meaningful syntax. The grouping can be through lexical unit and lexical relations.

Lexical Units

Lexical units, also known as syntactic atom that stands alone to give a meaning as in the case of root words or part of compound words. Sometimes they are attached to other units like prefix and suffix. This in turn, called free morphemes and bound morphemes. They fall into a narrow range of meaning and stand with each other to generate new meanings as in the words selected from the letter under study in the table below;

S/N	ROOT	WORD CLASS	ROOT+MOR P-HEME FROM THE LETTER	WORD CLASS	DENO-TATION	REF.
1.	Usual	Adjective	Un + usual	Adjective	Unexpected	Parag. 4
2.	Witting	Noun	Un + witting+ly	Adverb	Obliviously	Parag. 8
3.	Fortunate	Adjective	Un + fortunate	Adjective	Unsuccessful	Parag. 8
4.	Elected	Adjective	Un + elected	Adjective	Reprobate	Parag. 9
5.	Bear	Noun	Un + bear + able	Adjective	Unpleasant	Parag.14
6.	Real	Adjective	Un + realistic	Adjective	Utopian	Parag.14
7.	Weak	Adjective	Weak + ness	Noun	Debility	Parag. 6
8.	Clan	Noun	Clan + nish + ly	Adverb	A clan	Parag.10
9.	Ill	Adjective	Ill + ness	Noun	Sickness	Parag.10
10.	Hope	Noun	Hope + less	Noun	Desperate	Parag. 3
11.	Care	Noun	Care + less	Adjective	Heedless	Parag. 8

12.	Fruit	Noun	Fruit + less	Noun	Barren	Parag.14
13.	Inn	Noun	Inn + er	Adjective	Interior	Parag. 6
14.	Farm	Noun	Farm + ers	Noun	Cultivators	Parag. 8
15.	Citizens	Noun	Citizen + ship	Noun	Inhabitants	Parag.15
16.	Competence	Noun	In + competence	Adjective	Ineptitude	Parag. 9
17.	Security	noun	In + security	Noun	Uncertainty	Parag. 2
18.	Equality	Noun	In + equality	Adjective	Disparity	Parag. 2
19.	Potent	Noun	Im + potence	Adjective	Powerless	Parag.16
20.	Mount	Noun	Dis + mount	Verb	Alight	Parag.10

Lexical Relations in the Words Selected

Lexical relationships are the connections established between one word or the other; for example, one is bound to know that the opposite of “*anguish*” is “*enjoyment*” and that “*anguish*” is similar to “*agony*” as used by the former president Obasanjo. These words have a significant relationship to one another, whereas words like “*chair*” and “*coffee*” might have no meaningful relationship; thus, certain lexical relationships can inform one about the meaning of a word. There are few common types of lexical relationships: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and polysemy. This is not all the known types of lexical relationships, but as an introduction to lexical relations, these will suffice.

Synonymy

Synonym, this is perhaps the most commonly understood of all the lexical relations. Synonymy is the idea that some words have the same meaning as others, though this is not always the case; that is, there are some synonyms which cannot replace one another in a sentence. When words have the same meaning, they can replace one another without altering the meaning of a sentence; for example: ‘*consequence and aftermath*’. Sometimes synonym appears in phrases and sentences. For example in the letter under study, Obasanjo makes the following statements: (I



knew President Buhari before he became President and said that he is *weak*. I thought I knew the point where President Buhari is *weak*). The two sentences above have the same meaning describing the quality of incompetency in President Muhammadu Buhari. Further synonymy in the letter are illustrated in the table below:

S/N	WORDS	SYNONYMS
1.	Refurbish [parag. 10]	Recoup [parag. 10]
2	Hale [parag. 10]	Hearty [parag. 10]
3	Despair [parag.2]	Anguish [parag.19]
4	Situation [parag.14]	Condition [parag.18]
5	Leeway [parag. 10]	Freedom [parag. 10]

Antonymy

Antonym is precisely the opposite of synonymy. With antonym, one is concerned with constructions which are opposite to one another with respect to lexical relationships. For example, *security* and *insecurity*, *competent* and *incompetent*, *weak* and *strong* (*A Clarion Call for Coalition for Nigeria Movement*). These words have meanings which are opposite to one another, and these opposite meanings come in two forms: categorical and continuous. The categorical distinction is one that has two categories that contrast one another; for example, *security* and *insecurity*. These are categorical because there is no continuum between them; that is, less fire never means more water and less water never means more fire. Comparatively, antonyms that are on a continuum are constructions like big/small. This is due to the relative nature of these words; meaning, when we call a horse small, it may be relative to something else like another horse. And when that same horse is compared yet again, it might be the case that the horse is now big. So, the meanings between big and small are on a continuum relative to the object of discussion. The table below represents the above relationship of some selected



words from the letter under study:

S/N	SELECTED WORDS FROM THE LETTER	ANTONYMS	TYPE OF ANTONYM	WORD CLASS
1.	Anguish [parag. 14]	Enjoyment	Continuous	Noun
2.	Anger [parag. 14]	Glee	Continuous	Noun
5.	Blaming [parag. 9]	Applaud	Continuous	Verb
6.	Corruption [parag. 7]	Vitality	Continuous	Noun
7.	Clannishly [parag. 9]	Friendly	Continuous	Noun
9.	Complaining [para. 14]	Praising	Continuous	Adj
10.	Coalition [parag.15]	Disunion	Categorical	Noun
11.	Danger [parag.12]	Safety	Continuous	Noun
12.	Despair [parag. 19]	Elation	Categorical	Noun
13.	Dichotomy [parag. 8]	Agreement	Categorical	Noun
14.	Excuses [parag. 14]	Inculcate	Continuous	Noun
15.	Enchanting [parag. 17]	Repulsive	Continuous	Adjective
16.	Endorsing [parag. 18]	Disapproving	Categorical	Verb
17.	Futile [parag. 14]	Logical	Continuous	Adjective
18.	Fraught [parag. 12]	Empty	Continuous	Adjective
19.	Folly [parag. 14]	Sense	Continuous	Noun
20.	Future [parag. 13]	By gone	Categorical	Noun
21.	Glaringly [parag. 9]	Unremarkably	Continuous	Adjective
22.	Herdsmen [parag. 8]	Agrarians	Continuous	Noun
23.	Hale [parag. 10]	Unfit	Categorical	Adjective
24.	Hope [parag. 1]	Despair	Continuous	Noun
25.	Hunger [parag. 3]	Satiation	Continuous	Noun
26.	Hopeless [parag. 3]	Hopeful	Categorical	Adjective

27.	Illness [parag. 10]	Health	Categorical	Noun
28.	Impotence [parag. 16]	Vigour	Continuous	Adjective
29.	Incompetence [parag. 9]	Power	Categorical	Adjective
30.	Ineptitude [parag. 9]	Suitable	Categorical	Adjective

The table above represents most of the content words in the letter as used by the former president Obasanjo to convey his plainly message not only to President Muhammadu Buhari, but also to Nigerians at large since the words were both symbolically and denotatively used.

Hypernyms and Hyponyms

Hyponymy shows the relationship between a generic term (hypernym) and a specific instance of it hyponym. Hyponym is a word or phrase whose semantic field is more specific than its hypernym. The semantic field of a hypernym, also known as a superordinate, is broader than its hypernym. For example, “*Obasanjo*” implies “human,” or “animate”. This is due to the fact that Obasanjo, despite the beliefs of others, is both a human and animate. With each word, there is implied the notion of another semantic feature. Hyponyms on the other hand are more precise descriptions of things that fall in the set described by hypernym as selected from the letter under study;

S/N	HYPONYSMS	HYPERNYMS	REFERENCE
1.	FAILURE [parag. 14]	Impotence	Paragraph. 10 & 16
		Incompetence	Paragraph 9
		Ineptitude	Paragraph 9
		Weakness	Paragraph 16
		Futile	Paragraph 6
		Dereliction	Paragraph 14



		Lacklustre	Paragraph 1 & 9
2.	HELP [parag. 6]	Salvage	Paragraph 18
		Redeem	Paragraph 18
		Protect	Paragraph 22
		Save	Paragraph 14
3.	TERRORISM	Insurgency	Paragraph 7
		Insecurity	Paragraph 2 & 19
		Rampage	Paragraph 8
		Attacks	Paragraph 5
		Danger	Paragraph 12
		Fight	Paragraph – 7
4.	POVERTY [parag. 2]	Dearth	Paragraph - 2
		Hunger	Paragraph - 3
		Anguish	Paragraph – 14

Polysemy

Polysemy deals with constructions that have multiple meanings; for example, the words *sentence*, *condonation*, *statement*, and *horse*, *banish*, *fix* and *protest* in Obasanjo’s letter” can all adopt multiple meanings. These words could be considered polysemous, since they all have different potential meanings. The table below represents such multiplicity of meaning and where they occur in the letter under study:

S/N	POLYSEMY	WORDS SUBSTITUDES
1.	SENTENCE [paragraph14]	Decision, judgement, statement, verdict etc.
2.	CONDONATION [para 2]	Pardon, forgiveness, excuse, ignore, tolerated etc.
3.	STATEMENT [paragrp 1]	Announcement, Declaration,



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 4. HORSE [paragraph- 5] | Document, Report or Testimony
Animal, Throne, Timber frame, courser
etc |
| 5. FIX [paragraph- 9] | Place, Establish, Correct, Rectify etc. |
| 6. PROTEST [paragraph- 14] | Against, Assure, Affirm complain,
objection etc. |

WORDS FREQUENCIES IN THE LETTER

S/N	WORDS FROM THE LETTER	OCCURRENCE
1	Herdsman and crop/farmers	4 times
2	Poor	6 times
5	Coalition	11 times
6	Movement	10 times
7	Performance	5 times
8	Development	8 times
9	Economy	5 times
10	Democracy	4 times
11	Nigeria	27 times
12	Nigerians	15 times
18	Situation	9 times
19	Future	4 times
20	Hope	5 times
21	Progress	11 times
22	Political	7 times
24	Goal	16 times
25	Buhari	12 times
26	PDP	6 times
27	APC	2 times
28	Responsibility	4 times
29	Hopeless	4 times
30	I	50 times

Semantics Analysis

In linguistics, semantic analysis is the process of relating syntactic structures, from the level of words, phrases, clauses, sentences and



paragraphs to the level of the writing as a whole, to their language-independent meanings. It also involves removing features specific to particular linguistic and cultural contexts, to the extent that such a project is possible. The elements of idioms and figurative speech, being cultural are often also converted into relatively invariant meanings in semantic analysis. Semantic analysis can begin between individual words. This requires an understanding of lexical hierarchy, including hyponymy, hypernymy, meronymy, polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, and homonym. It also relates concepts like connotation (semiotics) and collocation, which is the particular combination of words that are frequently surrounding a single word. This can include idioms, metaphor, and simile like white as ghost with the availability of the enough materials to analyse. Semantics analysis can be used to catalogue and trace the style of writing of specific authors. Gaddard, (17).

Because Obasanjo is from the Yoruba clan, he opened the letter with a Yoruba proverb in the first paragraph where he said, **“When lice abound in your clothes, your fingernails will never be dried of blood”**. The proverb is an African because for a clothes to be abounded by lice can only be found in Africans which is an imagery of poverty. Lice in the above proverb is a connotation of many variable elements from the side of the incumbent president in particular and the side of other prominent Nigerians in general who blocked the development of this country for several years. These are the lice according to the letter:

“The lice of poor performance in government – poverty, insecurity, poor economic management, nepotism, gross dereliction of duty, condonation of misdeed – if not outright encouragement of it, lack of progress and hope for the future, lack of national cohesion and poor management of internal political dynamics and widening inequality – are very much with us today. With such lice of general and specific poor performance and crying poverty with us, our fingers will not be dry of ‘blood’. [paragraph. 2].



DENOTATION: Is the literal meaning or first dictionary meaning of a word. Barnard (196). Since most of the issues discussed in the letter are problems known to every patriotic Nigerian, Obasanjo used the words in their denotative manner not only to create suspense in the mind of readers but also to voice out the feelings of most sane Nigerians. To depict the imagery of a failure in Buhari's administration, Obasanjo used these types of word in the table below:

S.N	WORDS	DENOTATIONS
1.	Weakness	Faintness, softness, dimness, paleness, feebleness etc.
2.	Ineptitude	Incompetence, clumsiness, ineffectiveness, maladroitness, etc.
3.	Lackluster	Dreary, uninspiring, jaded, tame etc.
4	Incompetence	Ineffectiveness, ineptitude, uselessness, stupidity etc.
5	Nepotism	Favourism, partiality, bias, preference etc

On the other hand, President Buhari failed his campaign promises and party manifesto. To point out the areas, Obasanjo used words like the following

S/N	WORD	DENOTATIONS
1.	Corruption	Dishonesty, exploitation, sleaze, bribery, fraud etc.
2	Insurgency	Insurrection, rebellion, revolt, mutiny etc.
3.	Banditry	Lawlessness, violence, crime, robbery, thieving etc
5.	Kidnapping	Abduction, seizure, snatching, capture, hijacking etc.
6.	Recession	Slump, downturn, collapse, decline, stagnation, etc.

Poverty, inequality, rampages, despair, hunger, recession, farmers and herdsman crisis, to mention but a few. These are not only theoretically heard but practically seen in Nigeria today and it is affecting every sane Nigerian.



CONNOTATIONS: These are ascribed meaning in semantic, it is mostly used by literary artists as adopted by the former president in his letter. Blackwell & Mott. (152). below are some words connotatively used in the letter under study to describe the feelings of Nigerians

S/N	WORD	CONNOTATIONS
1.	Poverty	Lack of money, inadequate fun, hungry etc.
2.	Murmuring	Babbling, susurrating, demonstration, crying etc.
3	Despair	Hopeless, poverty, despondency, insecurity, etc.
4.	Condonation	Negligence, careless, etc
5	Dereliction	Failure, recklessness, negligence, etc.

The entire second paragraph is a connotation Obasanjo described the irregularities of the present cabinets of Buhari's administration and the Buhari's attitude of negligence as lice that must be smashed for the country to move forward. Lice is a parasite that exist mostly in dirty human body. It feeds only on human blood and gently damages the area. For example look at what Obasanjo called a lice;

“The lice of poor performance in government – poverty, insecurity, poor economic management, nepotism, gross dereliction of duty, condonation of misdeed – if not outright encouragement of it, lack of progress and hope for the future, lack of national cohesion and poor management of internal political dynamics and widening inequality – are very much with us today.

This indicates all the problems of this country; the existing, the uprising, in the Buhari's and himself in particular. As the great writer said, *“With such lice of general and specific poor performance and crying poverty with us, our fingers will not be*



dry of 'blood'. Dearth" [parag2]. It also portrays that Buhari is weak in implementation, incompetent in participation, lenient in decision making and is lacking of economic team and strategies to tackle the problems at hand. Obasanjo used connotation in other areas so that the message can easily be deciphered, considered, and reacted to by Nigerians. These types of words are mostly compound words. Look at the table below:

S/N	WORD	CONNOTATIONS
1.	Praise-singers [parag. 5]	Buhari's Supporters and cabinets
2.	Hired attackers [parag. 5]	Buhari's cohorts and Political thugs
3.	Clean hand [parag 6]	people of good hearts'
4	Self-deceit	Fooling oneself
5	Self-defeat	Wrong choice of Nigerian over Buhari
6.	Cases are buried and covered [prg. 9]	Nepotic fight against corruption and appointment
7.	Hands on deck [13]	Teamwork and collective effort
8.	Wringing our hands desperately p.12	Idleness
9.	Sentence Nigeria to prison [prg. 14]	Hardship upon hardship
10.	horse-rider [parag. 4]	Goodluck Jonathan
11.	Passing the buck [parg. 9]	Leadership of blame

And this is in line with the Sokoto state Governor's statement in his decamping speech where he said, "*The party has brazenly turned itself into a sanctuary for the corrupt and a machine for rigging and for the rape of democracy*"

Componential Analysis

Componential analysis (CA) is based on the presumption that the meaning of a word is composed of semantic components. So the essential features that form the meaning are elementary units on semantic level. By componential analysis, it is possible to state the smallest indivisible units of lexis or minimal components. Aitchison, (92). Componential Analysis is particularly applicable to

distinguishing the meanings of lexemes that are semantically related or in the same semantic domain. It is often seen as a process of breaking down the sense of a word into its minimal distinctive features; that is, into components which contrast with other components. It refers to the description of the meaning of words through structured sets of semantic features, which are given as “present”, “absent” or “indifferent with reference to feature”. To describe the presence and absence of a feature, binary rules are used. The symbol ‘+’ means the feature is present, while ‘-’ means the feature is absent. Saeed, (260). Structural semantics and CA were patterned on the phonological methods of the Prague School, which described sounds by determining the absence and presence of features. Jackson, (80). Jackson in “*Words and their meaning*” (83) Dan Nida in “*Componential Analysis of Meaning*” (32) categorize the types of components into two main types, i.e. common component and diagnostic or distinctive component. They serve to distinguish the meaning from others from the same domain.

A very simple example to explain these two types is provided by the words *man, woman, boy, girl*, and other related words in English. Leech, (96). These words all belong to the semantic field of ‘human race’ and the relations between them may be represented by the following matrix. Consider the components of the statement of the former president Obasanjo in paragraph 11 of his letter under study, “*I only appeal to brother Buhari to consider a deserved rest at this point of time*”

Appeal	Brother	Buhari	Obasanjo
+ Request	+ Animate	+Animate	+ Animate
+ Plea	+ Male	+ Male	+ Male
+ Petition	+ - Adult	+ - Adult	+ - Adult
+ Demand	+ Nigerian	+ Nigerian	+ Nigerian
+ Call	+African	+African	+African



+ Application	+ Leader	+ Leader	+ Leader
+ Entreaty	+ -Relative	+ Military career	+ Military career
	+ - Head of state	+ Head of state	
		+ Head of state	

The table above indicates the relationship between the incumbent president Buhari, and the former president Obasanjo and why he (Obasanjo) addresses Buhari as *brother*. Further example is in another sentence below: “*I thought president Buhari would fight corruption*” (paragraph-14). The content words in the sentence above are ‘*president, fight and corruption*’ which can be analyzed as:

PRESIDENT	FIGHT	CORRUPTION
+ Animate	+ Verb	+ Noun
+ - Male	+ Transitive	+ Dishonesty
+ Adult	+ Bout	+ Exploitation
+ Leader	+ Contest	+ Sleaze
+ Executive	+ Attack	+ Bribery

The table above shows the expectation of Obasanjo, of Buhari’s administration and this may be the reason of him (Obasanjo) supporting Buhari in the 2015 general election.

Structural semantics and CA were patterned on the phonological methods of the Prague School, which described sounds by determining the absence and presence of features. Jackson, (80). The method thus departs from the principle of compositionality. Saeed, (265). The lexical decomposition (or componential) approach to lexical semantics became one of the most influential in the 1960-1970s. In this theory, word meanings were broken down into semantic primitives or semantic features and their specifications. Consider the similitude in the Obasanjo’s regime and the present day *Buhariyya* in the diagrams below:

Components	Impotence	Ineptitude	Incompetence	Weakness	Condonation	Futile
BUHARI	+	+	+	+	+	-
OBASANJO	-	-	-	-	-	-

The above table indicates that Obasanjo as a statesman has the right to write about any irregularities rampaging this country, whether from the side of an individual or group, because he led the country for good eight (8) years peacefully and left the country intact despite the minor challenges. The People’s Democratic Party (PDP) has ruled this country for over sixteen years. It has successfully done a lot to this country particularly in the first twelve years. Most of the problems started within the last four years of Jonathan’s administration. Consider the preference in the table below;

Issues	Insecurity	Poverty	Recession	Herdsmen	Nepotism	Attack
PDP	+	-	-	-	+	+
APC	+	+	+	+	+	+

The componential analysis of the above table shows that President Buhari inherited some of the problem like terrorism, from the previous administration. He came into power when Boko Haram insurgency was at its peak because some territories of the North east states were under their control. This is in line with the statement of Obasanjo in the letter under study, *“If things were good, President Buhari would not need to come in. He was voted to fix things that were bad and not engage in the blame game”* (paragraph 9). In another dimension, look at the table below and give the answer to yourself on the similitude of the present and the recent administration.

Components	Educa-tion	Employ-ment	Econo-my	Reces-sion	Empower-ment	Infla-tion	Defec-tion	Nepo-tism
PDP	+	+	+	-	-	-	+-	+-
APC	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+



The above table epitomizes that education, economy and employment were in good shape during the administration of GoodLuck Jonathan, but in the case of Buhari’s regime, there are high rate of inflation, economic recession, nepotic appointment and rampant defections from one political party to the other. One positive aspect of the table is the presence of youth empowerment like N-power programme, Food vendor etc. In that regard, the great letter writer has already confessed where he said, “*I knew President Buhari before he became President and said that he is weak in the knowledge and understanding of the economy but I thought that he could make use of good Nigerians in that area that could help*” [paragraph 6]. Furthermore, Nida has developed three basic steps into six procedural steps which are important for analyzing the components of a related set of meanings. Nida (54-61). Consider the following terms used by Obasanjo in his letter under study with reference to the present administration and the previous one:

I. *Herdsmen and crop/farmers*

Components	Human	Adult	Male	Crops	Animals	Nomad	Fertile Land	Food producers
Herdsmen	+	+ -	+ -	-	+	+	+	+
Farmers	+	+ -	+ -	+	-	-	+	+

The above table indicates that the crop/farmers and herdsmen are interrelated individuals through which one cannot live without the other, since both parties are looking an arable farmland where grasses/crops can grow. Famers and herdsmen crisis becomes rampant in the administration of president Muhammadu Buhari as in the case of Taraba, Benue and Adamawa states in the northern part of the country which claimed many lives and properties.

II. *Armed bandits, Kidnappers, Boko Haram, robbery and corruption*

Components	Armed Bandits	Kidnapping	Boko Haram	Robbery	Sentiment	Corruption
JONATHAN	-	-	+	+	+	+
BUHARI	+	+	+	-	+	-

The table above expresses that armed bandits, kidnapping, nepotic appointment are more rampant in the Buhari's led administration whereas Boko Haram, robbery and corruption were rampant in Jonathan's administration.

Research Findings

After thorough investigation from mostly the civil servants, politicians, students and commoners for the purpose of this work, it is now understood that Obasanjo's letter is coherent to national demands. This is because there is nothing fictional. All the dictions selected for the matters pointed are in perfect representation to the problems mentioned. President Buhari is unlike the Buhari of 1984. He is weak and totally dormant as stated by the chairman, Arewa Consultative Forum, Anthony Sani who identified Buhari with culture of silence in every issue that comes up as his major flaw. He further noted, "Buhari hasn't spoken when his voice needed to be heard". And this in line with massive defection from the ruling party to other political parties by some aggrieved members.

Through this research, it is also realized that Obasanjo as a true statesman has the sole credibility to write in secret or open to any leader that abused his/her office. This is because, Obasanjo was once a military Head of state even before the military regime of Buhari. He acquired a lot of experiences from his military service and that would give him credit in the aspect of security. He further served as two-term democratic leader. This gives him civil experience to rule both ordinary and extra-ordinary people in the country. Besides, he ruled this country with total fairness and high respect to the law of the land since he left no stone unturned.



During his administration, many agencies were established to tackle corruption e.g. ICPC, EFCC etc. In other way, he established Universal Basic education (UBE) to tackle the problems of educational sector. During Obasanjo's regime, the level of unemployment was not at the considerable stage. Despite the minor cases of robbery, there was nothing like kidnapping, banditry, Boko Haram and vice-versa. Therefore, there is nothing wrong when Obasanjo keeps issuing this special statement to the nations' presidents and leaders.

SUMMARY

A letter, **The Way Out: A Clarion Call for Coalition for Nigeria Movement**, is an opened-letter written by the former president Olusegun Obasanjo, to the incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari on the current state of the country, published on January 24, 2018. The letter is written in 3584 words, out of which twenty two (22) are compound words. The letter is written in thirty (30) simple sentences, thirty-five (35) compound sentences, nineteen (19) complex sentences, seventeen (17) compound complex sentences, one African proverb, one Swahili word and five (5) rhetorical questions all in twenty two (22) paragraphs.

Other elements like idioms, figures of speech and embedded clauses were used in the letter. The participating agents are Politicians, particularly those in the ruling party (APC). It is nonfictional because current issues were noted and the dictions selected are in perfect conformity to the problems pointed.

CONCLUSION

The lexico-semantic analysis above portrayed the relationship between words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Lexical and semantic theories were used. It is now apparent that the former President Obasanjo, as man of many experiences on both the military and civil rule and as a member of many international organizations, who acquired national and international reputations, has the sole credibility to speak on matters affecting this country negatively. Sometimes in life, one cannot realize his

shortcomings until he/she vacates from that particular position as he (Obasanjo) said, *“Even the horse rider then, with whom I maintain very cordial, happy and social relationship today has come to realize his mistakes and regretted it publicly and I admire his courage and forthrightness in this regard”* the person described as a horse rider is a former President, Good luck Jonathan who was heedless with Obasanjo’s advice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sequel to these research findings, the researcher recommended the following;

1. Potential People like President Obasanjo are symbols of progress and development not only to Nigeria, but Africa at large. Since he assigned himself to write so as to wake the country leaders up, remind and guide them on their constitutional duties. Therefore, they should write on behalf of the masses because not everyone has the ability to do that.
2. Nigeria is a multiethnic and multi-religious country with about 200,000,000 million people; one man’s brain cannot suffice the demand of the masses. Therefore, presidents and leaders should adhere to these types of letters without minding the writer’s status. Heed the advice given by others who can positively contribute.
3. National interest should surpass Party interest, so that the targeted development and plans would be achieved.



WORKS CITED

- Aitchison, Jane. *Linguistics*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd. 2003.
- Crystal, David. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1987.
- Cruse, Alan D. *Meaning in Language. An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2000
- Finegan, Edward. *Language. Its Structure and Use*. 4th ed. United States of America: Thomson Wadsworth. 2004
- Jackson, Howard. *Words and Their Meaning*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc. 1996
- Kreidler, Charles. *Introducing English Semantics*. New York: Routledge. 2002
- Leech, Geoffrey. *Semantics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Ltd. 1983
- Lyons, John. *Linguistic semantics: An introduction*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Nida, Eugene A. *Componential Analysis of Meaning*. Belgium: Mouton. 1975
- Ogden, C. K., & Richards, I. A. *The meaning of meaning*. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench,
- Palmer, F. R. *Semantics (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.1983.
- Richards, I. A. *The philosophy of rhetoric*. London: Oxford University. 1936
- Saeed, John I. *Semantics*. 3rd ed. United Kingdom: Wiley Blackwell. 2009
- Wardhaugh, Ronald. *Introduction to Linguistics*. United States: McGraw-Hill. 1977
- Trubner. 1923



Robin Horton, "From Fishing Village to City-State: A Social History of New Calabar", in Mary Douglas and P.M. Kaberry, (eds), *Manin Africa*, (London, 1969), pp.37-58.

Preliminary reports have appeared in *Oduma*, *A Journal of the Rivers State Council for Arts and Culture*, the *West African Journal of Archaeology*, *Lagos, Notes and Records*, and in special reports of the *Ibadan Institute of African Studies*.

E. J. Alagoa, *The Present State of Oral Traditional Studies*, in Erim and Uya, (ed) *Perspectives and Methods*, p.36.

Ibid



