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SENTIMENT-BASED ANALYSIS BETWEEN APC AND PDP IN WAR-OF-WORDS: IMPLICATION TO RELIGIOUS AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

This study is on sentiment-based analysis between APC and PDP in war of words. It deals with political parties and their use of words in Nigerian politics. War of words as a line of attack is one form of elite manipulation of natural cleavages in a quest to acquire political power. These have negated the principals of religion and national integration like unity, faith, brotherhood, rules, laws, order and development. The study investigates some hate speeches made by these political parties against themselves. The objectives of this study therefore are to find out the causes and effects of hate speeches to religion, political parties and national integration. Also to ascertain the implicit and explicit implications of these on religion and political activities in a nation with diverse language, culture, and ethnic politics, that is caused by war of words among political parties in Nigeria. The data for this study is collected through the social media platforms and other available materials that are related to the study. The theoretical study adopted for this study is Game theory (zero-sum-game) and Speech Act theory. The findings reveal that war of words is a common campaign strategy in our political parties and it has very strong history of influence over political activities in Nigeria. The politicians use it to degrade and intimidate their opponents with the aim of gaining the sympathy of the electorates. Campaigns today in Nigeria are not based on issues, which are fundamental to inform choice of the electorate. Christians, and Muslim are actively involved in Game and Speech Act theories against each other manifesting in forms, including: incitement, distortion of facts about the other, blocking each other's chances, hatred and blackmailing as well as distortion of lives and properties. Based on this, the paper recommends for enlightenment programme in our society on the use of decency and decorum in a political and religious atmosphere.

Keywords: Political Parties, Religion, War, Words, National Integration, Language.

Introduction

Language has been used by man for a lot of activities in the society. As the major instrument for communication, language could be used to manipulate personality, declare war, resist ideas, goals and achievement. It could also be used to break up, condemn, cause violence, entertain, inspire, teach, establish cordial relationship, settle disputes, and peace co-existence

with people or communities (Obuh and Omenogor, 2012) in (Okafor and Alabi, 2017). Language plays a vital role in politics. It makes the mobilization of the masses easier for political participation. It is a medium of discussing and encoding socio-political policies which may bring about political solidity or divergence (Okafor and Alabi, 2017).

Political party is a group of dedicated people who come together to win elections, operate the government, and determine public policy. According to Thabo (2011), a political party is defined as an organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions, that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office. It is an organization of people who share the same views about the way power should be used in a country or society. One of the goals of political parties is to gain control of the government. It is their duty to work to recruit candidates for all elected. Thabo (2011), states some of the political parties key tasks in a democratic society, namely;

- Identifying the comprehensive and clear needs/ problems of members and supporters.
- Stabilizing the existing difficulties and find a means of accommodating them into the general policy.
- Mobilizing and motivating the citizens into participating in political decisions and also changing their opinions into viable policy option.

The political parties are funded by the following: party members, individuals and some organization that accept their political views. These parties also stand to benefit from governmental public funding. Political parties offers public offices to their candidates.. Political campaigns are synonymous with communicative actions of political discourse which is aimed at doing things with words to achieve certain goal. Nevertheless, the Nigerian politics has been full of fears generated by hate speeches among our politicians. The political gladiators are always at each others' jugular; making inciting statements during campaign, forgetting that all those provocative utterances during the campaign can impact negatively to the governed or masses. (Opeibi, 2009) in (Okafor & Alabi, 2017).Their rhetoric sounded more like beating of the "drum of war" against perceived political opponents; it lacked every form of decency and decorum and thereby worsen the already tensed religion and political atmosphere.

1.1 History of Political Party in Nigeria

The history of political parties in Nigeria will be incomplete if mention is not made of important personalities in the history of this nation. The first political party in Nigeria was founded in the year 1959, shortly before her independence in 1960. During that time, three political parties were formed, namely; National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC) was led by Nnamdi Azikiwe, Northern People's Congress (NPC) led by Ahmadu Bello and Action Group (AG) led by Obafemi Awolowo. During the 1959 election, no political party was able to win the election. The NPC joined force with NCNC to form the national government. This brought Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in as the prime minister while Nnamdi Azikiwe became as the Governor- General on Independence in 1960, again in 1963, Azikiwe became the president of Nigeria. The NCNC join together with AG and were led by Obafemi Awolowo. Both formed a new party called United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). The NPC also merged with the remaining faction to form another party called Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) which was led by Akintola. In 1975, there was a coup de ta, that

brought about the removal of General Gowon and assumption of General Murtala Mohammed as president of Nigeria. Unfortunately, In 1976, Murtala was killed in an unsuccessful Buka Dimka coup de ta. Again, in 1993, another election was held between the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Party (NRP). This election was won by Abiola of SDP and was said to be the fairest and freest election ever conducted in Nigeria.

On May 29, 1999, Nigeria returned to civilian rule and General Obasanjo became the president under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). He later handed over to late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua of the same political party who defeated the Action Congress (AC) and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). Yar'Adua did not complete his tenure before his demise. After the demise of Yar'Adua, his vice Goodluck Jonathan took over. In 2011, he was sworn in a second time after winning convincingly. In 2015, during the preparation of election, Action Congress (AC) join together with Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and they came up with APGA. There was also a newly formed party called All Progressive Congress (APC) and their flag bearer is Mohammadu Buhari. A lot of PDP members left for the new party; APC, this made things to be difficult for the PDP party members. Mohammadu Buhari of APC later defeated Goodluck Jonathan of PDP and was sworn in as President on May 29, 2015. APC is presently the ruling party, while PDP is the main opposition party.

1.2 Political Parties and Language use as it relates to Mind Control

Language is like an instrument used for abuses and control of power in politics. Orwell (1949) believed that there is a connection between totalitarianism and corruption of language. He emphasized on political languages from which they derived another meaning as it relates to politics. One of the Orwell's essential messages in 1984 is that language is of direct importance to human believe. This is because of the language structures and restrictions which individuals are proficient of inventing and expressing. Orwell went further to state that if there is a sense of decorum in the language use in political parties, it will make it impossible for one to conceive of disobedient or rebellious thought. In politics, language has the power to cover the truth and misinform the masses. Our minds are being controlled by politicians who fallaciously made us believe they have our best interests at heart through their words. These are the findings of a series of researchers that show how a few prevailing politicians have the power to influence how we feel, how we act, and even how we vote, without us the masses ever knowing about it. Deliberate mind control of the masses by the politicians is, by itself, nothing new. The direct and smart manipulation of the organized attitudes and voices of the masses is an important element in a democratic society. Those who exploit this unseen mechanism of society comprise an unseen government that is the true ruling power of this country. We are governed, our minds molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we call our leader. In almost every act of our daily live, we are governed by the politicians who uses words to control the mind of the people. In as much as the political parties in existence (PDP &APC) controls Nigerians culture, economy, and political system, they can never delude dictatorial control until they gain control of the people's minds. These political parties also ensure control over citizens by disturbing personal loyalties to anyone other than itself. The Nigerian political parties (PDP &APC) make use of personal and collective fears to maintain party loyalty and suppress revolt respectively through threat of violence and actual violence. Orwell was deeply concerned about how inaccurate and euphemistic language dreary people's speech for critical thought.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Theoretical Study

2.1.1. Politeness Theory

Politeness theory was developed in 1978 by Levinson and Brown. It is the theory that crams for presumption of the outrage of face posed by face threatens acts. Brown and Levinson (1987) were of the opinion that a face threat directly affects the alleged relationship between the speaker and the listener. Politeness theory can be said to be positive or negative. The positive face occurs when it is used to make hearers feel good and also in a situation where audience knows each other fairly well. The negative aspect is directly associated with an individual's desire to be free from imposition. Both positive and negative face can certainly be terrorized during a concession. Politeness has to do with language, and language use. It is the relationship between language and social reality. Politeness provides insights into structure of social reality and its establishment and maintenance. According to Ugochukwu (2017:177), for an interaction to proceed efficiently, the parties must allow one another maintain face. Face maintenance are decided not only by who and what the individual holds him/her to be, but by how others respond to his/her presentation (Goffman, 1967 in Ugochukwu, 2017). Maintaining face therefore requires co-operation of others. Deutsch (1961) in Ugochukwu, (2017), states that face is one of an individual's most sacred possession, stating that maintaining face is essential to stain ones self-esteem.

2.1.2. Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory was propounded by Austin but was published after his death in 1962. Speech act could be seen as the sufficient use of language by a language speaker to attend to people in the society in order to have a new dawn. The speech act manifest in 3 different categories namely; Locution, Illocution and Per-locution (Agbaedo 2008). Speech act utterances can be direct or indirect due to the above three categories of speech act mentioned earlier. This implies that one's speech can be explicit or implicit in nature. This means that words meant more than what is uttered (Okafor & Alabi, 2017). In Nigerian politics, politicians use speech to threaten and intimidate their opponent.

2.2. Empirical Studies

Hate speech in Nigerian politics is as old as politics itself. This menace has been in existence since 1960, but it has become intensive since 2010, after the death of President Yar'Adua. Neisser (1994) opines that hate speech refers to all verbal, written and symbolic communications that criticize racial, ethnic and political groups, either by suggesting that they are inferior in some respect or they are not welcome for any other reasons. The above explanation is seen to be true because hate speech can be used to reverse whatever progress made in a democracy as could be seen today between APC and PDP in our country Nigeria.

Similarly, Kayambazinthu & Mogo (2002) sees hate speech as war waged on others by means of words that deprived them of their self-esteem. In essence, hate speech is any speech, motion, manner, writing or display that could provoke people to violence or prejudicial action. It is aimed at incitement, inequity, disgust and violence (Ezeibe & Ikeanji 2016).

Furthermore, Nemes (2002) states that hate speech can arouse pain, distress, fright, shame and seclusion to individuals. He further explains that hate speech towards group of people can bring variation problems and segregation; it creates the feeling of fear and discourages them

from participating and expressing their opinions. In support of the above, Nielsen (2002) opined that the deprivation and humiliation brought by hate speech can silence the victims and therefore reinforce existing hierarchies in society, while Parech (2006) says it can also lead victims to become aggressive and dangerous. The above is seen in APC-PDP, where hate speeches are used publicly. It is crystal clear that hate speech is destructive and needs to be abridged especially on social media.

On the other hand, Gagliardon et al (2015) states that online hate speech is not essentially different from similar expressions found offline; It enhances the effect of hate speech and facilitate obstacles regarding legal devices of combating online hate speech. Kind and Sutton (2013) added that the atmosphere of online hatred is characterized by targeted favoritism and fierce attacks which tend to gather in time and space and radically increase after their so called political clash. In essence, the social media has contributed to the increase in the use of hate speech by our politicians, thereby increasing the rate of discrimination and violence in our society.

3. War of words between APC and PDP from Twitter

On May 25 2018, there was war of word between PDP and APC over the destruction of Fayemi's billboards.

The APC formerly sent an appeal to the Inspector General of Police and Director General of Department of State Security (DSS) over the damage of a billboard belonging to its candidate. In a quick response, the PDP Publicity Secretary, Mr. Jackson Adebayo, blamed the APC chairman and members of his party of trying to blackmail Fayose.

Adebayo said:

> We do not have criminals in our party, it is APC that have hoodlums and you can see it from their recent congresses. PDP is a party of peace, our rally in Oye day was a peaceful one; and the governor and our members were not responsible for the damage of the billboards. (Vanguard; May 25, 2018).

Again, on September 28, 2016, there was hate speeches between APC and PDP as Edo elects governor. The PDP accused APC of allegedly inciting the election supervisors to compromise the outcome of the poll in 9 out of 28 local government areas. The state Publicity Secretary of PDP, Chris Nechikhare stated thus;

> It has come to our notice that INEC and state government have seriously tampered with the election that is going to take place tomorrow. They have written results for the nine local government areas on behalf of APC. These results are being held by the supervisors and the collation officers at a point where they plan to rig the result with the real ones at the local government level once the election is over. (Punch September 28, 2016).

On the Contrary, the state chairman of the APC, Anselem Ojezua, denied the claim and described it as a "figment of the imagination of the PDP". Ojezua said:

> That is a fabrication of their thought. They have lost the election already. I am the state chairman of the APC. I have been in my home town for three days. So, what time will I have to go and talk about bribing INEC? (Punch; September 28, 2016).

Ojezua continued by saying that:

> It is the PDP people that know the INEC people. After all, most of these INEC officers were employed during the PDP government. We have trained our agents and they have decided to be at alert. (Punch; September 28, 2016).

Similarly, on September 21, 2018 an APC stalwart and a member representing Brass constituency I in the Bayelsa state House of Assembly, Mr. Israel Sunny-Goli, engage in a war of words with Bayelsa state chairman of the PDP, Moses Cleopas, describing the party chair as "kitchen slave".

The PDP chairman characterized Sunny-Goli of APC as a "drowning politician whose stock-in-trade is notoriety, violence, occultism and blood-thirstiness".

In a swift response, the APC stalwart described the PDP chairman as an overzealous executive slave master and a willing stooge of Governor Seriake.
(Emmanuel Addeh, September 21, 2018).

Again, on July 11, 2018, there was a war of words between some senators of APC and PDP on the floor of the senate over a motion on human rights violation by the present administration "Sen. David Umaru (APC) noted the alarming rise in cases of alleged human right violations and consistent assault on the provisions of the 1999 constitution by the Executive". Contributing to the motion, Sen. Jibrin Barau (APC) said the "senate should not waste time in discussing the matter because most of the issues raised are before the courts of law" Also, Sen. Abdullahi(APC) said that the motion was targeted at tarnishing the image of the Buhari administration. In direct response, Sen. Enyinnaya Abaribe(PDP) said thus;

> "I have been a victim of human right abuse, for which this senate contributed for me to be standing here today. I wonder why a senator would be arrested on the street and then we will say everything is alright (Daily Trust, July 11, 2018).

On May 19, 2018, there was war of words between PDP and APC over Ekiti governs poll. The PDP chairman Uche Secondus stated that Nigerians would not vote for the APC federal government in 2019. He described the forthcoming election as a litmus test, saying,

> "There will be crisis if you attempt to rig Ekiti state election. We don't know if there will be Nigeria after the crisis. Nigerian security agencies and the Independent National Electoral Commission should not be deceived into rigging elections."(Punch, May 19, 2018)

At the event, the Rivers State Governor, Chief Nyesom Wike, said,

> "The APC has divided Nigeria based on religious beliefs. Nigerians are tired of the deciet and lies of the APC. For us in Rivers State, we have nothing to do with APC. The APC has no business with Rivers State." (Punch, May 19, 2018)

But the National Publicity Secretary of APC, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi said the PDP was still living under the illusion that it could intimidate Nigerians into voting it back to power.

Abdullahi said;

"We cannot have this kind of threats from a political party that claims to be democratic. We cannot have this kind of irresponsibility in the name of opposition. Nigerians now know that each time the PDP loses an election; it claims the election is rigged.

To say the country will cease to exist if you lose in an election is the height of irresponsibility. They (the PDP) are preparing the ground for carnage; Nigerians should take note that the PDP is declaring war on the nation if it loses an election.

What happens if every party starts to threaten bloodshed if it loses an election? Should we now because of their threats handover the country to the PDP?" (Punch, May 19, 2018)

On August 4, 2018, there was war of words between APC and PDP over the defection of politicians from the two major political parties. The development did not go well with some members of the ruling party who leveled barrage of criticism on the defectors as well as attacked the leadership of the Senate for its presumed role in the switch of camps.

Starting off with what many have described as double standards was the reaction of the National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Adams Oshiomole to the defection of Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom. Mr Oshiomole who had a week earlier pleaded with the governor not to leave the APC described Ortom as a failure adding that his defection was a relief to the party.

"I am pleased as the national chairman, and I believe that the leadership of the party in Benue state is also pleased that Ortom has finally left the party and returned to the association he belongs" (Daily Trust, August 4, 2018)

In a swift reaction to the verbal attacks above, Governor Ortom in a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Terver Akase, expressed shock that he was attacked by the party's National Chairman, who had earlier described him as one of the idols of the party, APC. Berating Oshiomole for his double-speaking, the statement told him to differentiate between being a party chairman and a union leader.

"The APC National Chairman's sudden annoyance towards Governor Ortom has shown among other things, the true tyrannical intentions of the ruling party APC against Nigerians. Oshiomhole appears to be flying a kite of an agenda to frighten and suppress Nigerians who desire freedom from a party which has clearly failed to secure lives and property."(Daily Trust, August 4, 2018).

Implication for Religious and National Integration

The attainment of Nigeria's independence on October 1st 1960 was certainly not obtained on a platter of gold. The colonial masters were not willing to succumb to the pressure of self-rule, but it took the doggedness and the patriotic zeal of our founding fathers to achieve independence. It is sad to note however, that what is being witnessed in the country today negates the aspiration and the vision of those great patriots. The relentless killings and the

upsurge of attack caused by these war of words has threatened the National Integration as well as corporate existence of the country. The activities of these politicians and religious fanatics must be nipped in the bud or they will tear the fabrics of our dear country. Therefore, the implications of religious and national integration are outlined below:

A Threat to National Integration

The war of words between APC and PDP has been a threat to our nation. According to Agujiobi (2014) "Our Nation is on fire" this conflagration must therefore be extinguished to avoid total destruction and anarchy. The unity of our country is not assured anymore. Ntamu, al, etal (2014), noted that, Nigerian politics has been replete with lots of anomalies and upheavals because the country leaders past and present have dragged religion into politics in their quests for leadership in the country and as a result of this, the country is at the brink of collapse. Udobata (2023), observed that, the politics of this country is no more based on the integrity, honesty, competence of the candidate, but what you can do for the country but based on your religious inclination.

No wonder Ishaku (2015) noted that, the Northern parts of this country did not cast their votes in 2015 election on party affiliation or the competency of the candidates but on their religious affiliation. Supporting this, Abel (2015) also observed that in 2015 election, which Muhammadu Buhari a Muslim won all Northern States except Taraba and Nasarawa States which are mostly populated by Christians. This is one of the religious implications and is not a good way to go in Nigeria because it disintegrates our dear nation.

Uncontrolled Corruption

In our country today, one of the main problems is corruption. Corruption has been threatening our nationhood as a result of the inability of our leaders to tackle it. Agha (2012) opined that, the uncontrolled corruption of public officials is especially the acute problem in our country. The cause according to him is lack of credible leaders who don't have anything to offer and that is why they capitalized in campaign of heat speech and insulting each other. No wonder, Achebe (1983) opined that;

> The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely, a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian land and climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility or the challenge of personal example which are hallmark of true leadership.

Collaborating with Achebe, Basil (2013) observed that;

> The failure of leadership in this country is because, honesty and integrity people are no-longer elected into office of leadership. People now cast their votes based on religion and ethnicity which is the root cause of corruption in this country. And if allowed to continue, will shake the unity of this country as one Nigeria.
>
> A look at this statement shows that the inability of the electorates to elect an honest, and competent and responsible leader is mainly the cause of corruption

Wanton Destruction of Lives and Property

Series of killings and destruction of property in Nigeria have been traced to the war of words of these political authors. According to Abashiru (2023) "the religious and political violence have claimed more than 200 hundred thousand lives (200,000), more than fifty thousand (50,000) houses burnt and property worth Billions of naira lost since independence". Due to these war of words, the country has gone through difficult moment as a country. Malik (2015) noted that "all the religious violence in this country has political undertone and all the political violence has also religious undertone". This is to say that, the war of words has done more harm than good to our religious and national integration

Breakdown of Religious Moral Order

It is an existential truism that the religious institutions are the custodian of morality, which is largely responsible for the seeming social order enjoyed in the other spheres of life. Morality also focus on human conduct, what one ought to do and ought to avoid. According to Okwueze (2003), religion or religious leaders appear to stand on the way of politicians to corrupt, discriminatory, inhuman, unacceptable and uncomplimentary attitudes to governance. However, according to Abashiru (2013), politics of this country is a politics of bitterness and negligence of moral and ethical conduct, using money to blindfold our religious leaders and dictate to our religions what to do and what ought not to do instead of the other way round. In view of this assertion, religious institutions are now the followers of the politicians instead of the politicians being the followers of their religions. So the implication of this war of words has brought about moral breakdown by the citizens who have neglected the moral code and followed the tunes of the politicians which are election rigging, tugs, assassins, kidnappers, and snatching of ballot boxes.

Religious Intolerance

It is expected that the religions in this country should be a force of unity and co-existence but because of the interface with politics, the politicians use it to achieve their aims not minding the consequences on the masses. According to Eke (2024):

> Politicians see religion as a means to perpetuate violence, fueling of ethnic consciousness and solidarity, acquisition of political power and socio-economic gains, massive killings and the wanton destruction and vandalization of property of those considered infidels or pay allegiance to other religions. As a means of commandeering political legitimacy in Nigeria, it has dictated the pace of the political democratization process which hitherto nurtured ethnic consciousness in the country.

There are so many crises in the country today because of religious intolerance and that is why if it is not Muslims and Christians in the core north, it will be herdsmen attacking Christians especially in Plateau, Benue and Nasarawa in the North Central or one sect like Boko-Haram will start killing people and destroying property.

From the above, it is clear that the utterances is not working toward uniting the country rather to disintegrate it.

Bad Images

The utterances of these politics discourage foreign investors because when these foreigners who want to establish or build an industry in Nigeria come and witness the political crises,

religious intolerance, corruption, wanton destruction of property, judiciary lapses, etc, they may not e willing to invest their money because the security of their business here is not guaranteed in the means of all these implications. As a result of that, the country is being seen as a hostile and war zone. This no doubt tarnishes the image of Nigeria at the international level.

Conclusion

In this study, we conclude by saying that hate speech and polluted language are rampant on social media platforms and in Nigeria politics. Hate speech has negative influence on Nigerian politics because of its increase in usage on social media by our politicians. Nigerian politicians have provided sufficient grounds for the manipulative use of hate speech in the pursuit of political power. The PDP and APC have call it a point of duty to use war of words against one another. Hate speech is not now regulated in the Nigerian politics and none of it users has been punished. The National Electoral Acts need to be modified to address the use of hate speeches in electoral campaign. There is need for enlightenment campaign in our political sector; this will help in minimizing the use of hate speeches among politicians especially on social media platform. Nigerians should love and respect one another irrespective of place of one's political affinity, origin and religion. These have caused political and sectarian violence claiming lives and properties. Law should be made to stand against any religious leaders or politicians found to have inciting, distorted facts about each other. They should be adequately punished by the law.

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