
Political Discourse as Phenomenon of Empirical Knowledge**EJIKE, Promise Uzochi**

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a comprehensive linguistic and discourse-based analysis of selected political speeches delivered by Senator Douye Diri, the Executive Governor of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Drawing on the frameworks of Conceptual Metaphor Theory [CMT] and Critical Discourse Analysis [CDA], the research explores how language is strategically employed to construct meaning, shape ideology, and influence public perception within the socio-political landscape of Bayelsa State. Using a qualitative descriptive research design, the study examines key speeches such as “The Budget of Growth 2021,” inaugural addresses, and educational policy statements to uncover the deployment of metaphorical and rhetorical devices) in advancing governance narratives. Findings reveal that Governor Diri’s speeches employ metaphors such as development is a journey, education as a pathway to growth, and the state as a family unit to communicate visions of unity, progress, and moral governance. Through the strategic use of inclusive pronouns and emotive expressions), he constructs a discourse of shared responsibility and legitimacy while appealing to values of justice, service, and collective resilience. The analysis demonstrates that his political language goes beyond rhetoric, serving as an instrument of persuasion and ideological framing). The study concludes that political discourse in Nigeria is a potent instrument for constructing meaning and political identity. It recommends extending metaphorical and discourse-based analysis to digital communication platforms), where language continues to redefine political communication in the contemporary era.

KEYWORDS: Political discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, political speeches play a crucial role in shaping public discourse and influencing public opinion. They serve as powerful tools for politicians to express their visions, persuade the electorates as well as anyone who cares to listen and as well garner support for their ideologies and policies. As such, an analysis of a textual stylistic perspective provides valuable insights into the strategies and techniques employed by politicians to achieve their communicative goals. This dissertation conducts a critical discourse analysis of selected political speeches of Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State, examining the linguistic features, metaphorical and discursive strategies utilized by the Governor to convey his political messages effectively.

Understanding the background of the study is crucial to contextualize the research within existing knowledge and scholarly contributions. The practice of politics has over the years been supplied

with the tactful formulation of perceptions and beliefs about significant occurrences of problems, policy changes and most significantly of leaders. Amidst this construction of beliefs are a clash of interests, persuasion and manipulation, imposition of opinions, definition of allies and opponents etc.

There is, therefore always, a linguistic, discursive and communicative dimension to the field of politics. Edelman (1985:1) attests to this phenomenon when he commented that while coercion and intimidation help to check resistance in all political systems, the key course must always be the evocation of meanings that legitimize favored courses of action and threaten or reassure people so as to encourage them to be supportive or remain inactive.

This evocation of meanings undoubtedly hinges on carefully crafted speeches which have therefore become an integral component to the field of politics. This is due to their intended objective which is to persuade the audience to accept the stance of the speech maker. To this end, political speeches assume traits such as subtle mystification and distortion in their quest to persuade the audience to accept the stance of the speech maker (Edelman, 1985). In the struggle for political power between those who seek to maintain power and those who seek to resist it for instance, the ability of a political speech to mystify and distort becomes very crucial. In this, several scholars have explored the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of political speeches, explaining the intricate relationship between language and politics. For instance, Oyetade and Oyimade (2016) conducted an analysis on political speeches in Nigeria, focusing on the linguistic features that contribute to effective political communication. Their study revealed the predominant use of persuasive strategies such as metaphor, repetition and parallelism in political speeches, emphasizing the significance of stylistic choices for successful communication.

Furthermore, Farneti and Ross (2018) investigated the rhetorical strategies employed by political leaders, highlighting the role of ethos, pathos and logos in persuasive discourse. Their study emphasized how politicians adopt their linguistic choices to appeal to the emotion and rationality of their audience, enabling them to build trust and credibility. The expression of thoughts, values, views, wishes, emotions revolve hugely around language. Language is what is spoken or written. It consists of the use of words in a meaningful and agreed order.

Aims and Objectives

1. To analyze the embedded linguistic features in Governor Diri's language as used to construct his political identity and authority.

To evaluate how Governor Diri situates his speeches to create a sense of inclusion or exclusion.

LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL REVIEW

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis scrutinizes the meaning and context of written text, focusing on linguistic and symbolic aspects. The conveyance of meaning is language dependent. In textual analysis, language is seen beyond the surface as how it constructs reality and shapes perceptions.

Brown (2015) emphasizes that textual analysis is a critical tool for uncovering how language constructs, maintains, and challenges power relations within society. It is widely applied in the area of communication as it is a holistic discipline approach that cuts across various disciplines related to social sciences and humanities. The scholar went on to comment on the methodologies of textual analysis, emphasizing its ability to integrate variations that delve into more specific techniques within the related field such as content analysis, semiotics, interactional analysis, and rhetoric criticism. Fairclough (2015) argues that language is not neutral—it is a social practice

deeply intertwined with power relations and ideology. The origin of textual analysis can be seen in the Greek myth of Hermes, the mythological God. In his exploration, when Hermes was saddled with the significant role of transmitting messages from the gods to artificial mortals, he had to initially interpret the divine texts and later translate and elucidate their meaning in a language easy to comprehend by ordinary humans.

Textual analysis encompasses a wide understanding of language and symbols contained in texts to obtain insights concerning how readers understand the text. Textual analysis aims to understand the meaning or natural meaning present in the text. Textual analysis is a fundamental tool employed by various researchers to obtain insights into how people understand or see the world. It serves as a method, a process for obtaining information, especially for readers seeking to understand how individual of various cultures and subcultures sees their identity and their position in the world (Alan, 2012).

In addition, Aneri (2020) posited that when discussing textual analysis, we take into account the possibility surrounding the most appropriate understanding of a given context.

Omozuwa (2013) provides insight to uncover the intended purpose of textual analysis. He submitted that the hallmark of textual analysis goes beyond revealing a definite or concealed meaning of a text rather; our intent is to identify and recognize a wider array of potential meanings fundamental to the material analyzed. Instead of trying to reveal the hidden meanings, explore the writer's subconscious intentions, or identify potential biases within the given text, we emphasized employing different techniques or perspectives. This principle provides us with a better understanding and interpretation of the analyzed materials by taking into account the cultural and ideological perspectives established within a particular time. Additionally, it contributes to the text gaining wide spread recognition and becoming an inherent part of human understanding. The real purpose of textual analysis goes beyond a mere examination of the text's structure or appearance; it intends to obtain the accurate meaning or message of a given text. It does not only focus on explaining or interpreting the structure of the text. Rather, it encompasses developing a dynamic structure of the text, maintaining the real context of the work and its essence. Ultimately, textual analysis does not try to reveal what constitutes the text but, instead, seeks to find out how the text was developed and disseminated.

Political Speeches

It is widely believed that language and politics are closely related; language is for instance, the voice with which politics is heard, is the lifeblood of politics. It is the channel through which political discourse, thoughts and ideas are extensively dispersed. Mazrui (1975:48) substantiates this when he writes that: "Language is the most important point of entry into habit of thought of people. It emboldens within itself circulative association derived from the total experience of its people". Language is the mental faculty that allows humans to undertake linguistic behavior. It is the tool with which government tries to control not only the behavior but also the thought of the electorates or citizens. It is debatable whether language would have developed in the first place without politics and certain that politics would never have developed without language. Political speeches serve as a critical platform for public figures and leaders to communicate their policies, ideas, and visions to the masses. Language is the communicative tool for avoiding political conflict as well as incites. One form of constructive ambiguity is mastering the art of generalization. Some shrewd politicians endeavor to avoid committing themselves to electoral promises that they are not sure they can fulfill. Although Politicians are creative in terms of creativity in language usage (Daniel 2004:243) at campaign rallies, political speeches are made in one language or the other, which in most of the time, the proficiency of a fluent speaker has a greater positive effect on the

electorates, who believe that in a changing world, the affairs of the states should be entrusted in the hands of the literates (Omoniyi 2004:112). It is imperative to note that people want their leaders to offer hope and prospects of a brighter future. Language such as English language in Nigeria has proven to be of tremendous value to Nigerian politicians.

Karasik (2012) also emphasizes that political communication is deeply shaped by cultural codes, power dynamics, and strategic language use. He provides a framework for analyzing how politicians construct meaning and influence public perception

Political speech is employed as a technique to sway power to impact and influence people's thoughts and opinions. It stands as a technique used to govern the society at large.

According to Chilton (2018), political speech goes beyond mere communication; it encompasses strategic and influential devices used to deceive and persuade the perceptions and opinions of the public for political interest. Speech is heard by a large number of people, and each individual possesses different interpretations that can influence the candidates' chances of winning. In his David (2012) significantly opined that a political speech is not merely a vehicle for conveying information, but a strategic tool for shaping social relationships, influencing public perception, and performing actions through language. He explained that political speech as a device used for establishing and maintaining social interaction, conveying feelings and facilitating insights, policies, and programs in any society. From a pragmatic perspective, this conforms to Speech Act Theory, wherein the outcome of a speech act often depends on the speaker's intention and the context in which the words were spoken. In political speech, concepts and ideologies must be communicated through language to ensure unity from the immediate audiences and as well from individuals who may come in contact with parts of the speech through media coverage at a later period (Nelly, 2012).

The rationale is that political speech seeks to convince and influence not only those physically seen at the time the speech was made but also include a broad audience that may come across it on other media platforms. Words and expressions are strategically utilized or excluded to influence interpretations in various areas. Additionally, political speeches are designed by a network of proficient speechwriters well-grounded in the use of persuasive language. The outcome of a political speech may not be based on correctness or truthfulness; rather it may lie on the effective presentation of arguments (Sam, 2015). Various speeches are communicated to the people prior to the election; these speeches can also be viewed as pre-election special addresses, specifically during campaigns and rallies. Ultimately, a political speech stands as a text, an outcome, and a procedure that can be spoken or penned down (Hashim, 2015). However, several politicians are unobservant of the relationship between spoken words, the actual meanings of the words, and the steps implied by the spoken words. In the study of political speeches, a well-known theory that has tested and proven efficacy and is appropriate for analysis is the speech act theory. Citizens whose system of governance is democratic in nature are given the privilege to exercise their choice of leadership by going to the polling unit to cast their vote during the election period either for individual candidates or political parties (Janet, 2023). Regardless of the fact whether individuals vote is based on their political belief, or not, their choice of governance will be determined by the communication through language. Karasik (2012) asserted that all through various political systems, including, autocratic, oligarchic, and democratic, leaders have historically employed spoken word to convince their candidates of their competence and accountability in occupying such position. In essence, the use of persuasive language applies to various types of government structures.

Stylistic Study

Generally, stylistic study is seen as a contemporary version of the ancient field of 'rhetoric'. In the time past, Rhetoric educated students on how argument should be organized and structured, the proficient use of figures of speech and the ultimate crafting and speech variation or writing structure to attain the highest peak. The comparison indicates that, just like rhetoric, stylistics centres on how language and style are effectively used to persuade or create friendly communication (Wales, 2013). In other words, it is the study and examination of texts from a linguistic angle. According to Weber (2018), stylistics serve as a connector between literary criticism and language, bringing together the analysis of literature with the study of language.

However, stylistics is not an independent area of study; instead, it functions at the meeting point of these disciplines. Stylistic studies generally focus on literary works but do not exclusively depend on "canonical literary works". The scope of stylistic study goes beyond its analytical scope rather it covers a wide range of written works spanning various genres which includes those not conventionally considered prestigious in the literary domain. The key function and essence of stylistic study depends on its capacity to streamline immediate comprehension of spoken words and texts, thereby optimizing our appreciation of the texts.

According to Sebeok (2020), the hallmark of most stylistics is not solely to describe the conventional features of texts in separation, but instead to describe their operating function for interpreting the text; or to establish a link between literary outcomes with linguistically relevant factors. Similarly, Simpson (2014) viewed that stylistics study and aspects of linguistic study apply to literary works, establishing the relationship between language style and artistic function, with a focus on questions of motivation such as "why" and "how" instead of "what". However, there are two types of stylistics namely, literature stylistics and general stylistics.

Consequently, stylistic approaches can and have been utilized to explore non-fictional or non-literature works such as advertising, academic writing, political speeches, news broadcasting and other semiotic features such as TV and picture-oriented marketing, film, diverse-mode publications, etc. Stylisticians largely apply linguistic models, theories, and frameworks in text analysis to describe why a text appears to be written in a particular way it does and why it gives itself to definite or different interpretations of meaning.

Generally, stylistics, as its name suggests, centres on the style seen in both spoken and written language. Its root depends on the notion that every time we use language for speaking or writing, we always consciously and unconsciously make decisions concerning the words we select (lexical selection) and how we employ them (syntactic structure). These selections generally contribute to a unique style, and changes in these choices result in an alteration in the language style. This is the rationale of what stylistics seeks to explore: how scholars attain certain outcomes through their language styles and how readers interpret these changes. Thus, stylistic study is seen as the study of linguistic styles and the investigation of how language is used or applied (Aminu, 2015).

In conclusion, stylistics study is shaped by the investigation of linguistic style in different contexts, either linguistically or situational. However, due to the complex historical view and broad spectrum of issues involved in the examination of this field of study, identifying a definitive definition or interpretation of stylistics becomes a challenge. Also, establishing a clear understanding between stylistics and other branches of linguistic study that discuss text analysis also proves to be intricate

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor as propounded by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980 believes that metaphorical language is a reflection of how humans conceptualize abstract concepts through concrete experiences other than stylistic devices. It suggests that understanding of complex and intangible concepts is usually structured and understood in terms of more concrete domains with metaphorical mappings serving as a cognitive mechanism for corresponding knowledge between domains. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors shape our conceptual system and influence how we perceive reality. It shapes our views without we realizing it.

Also, Lakoff (2008) further explains that metaphor is not merely a linguistic flourish but a neural mechanism that structures thought. Metaphor resides not only in language but also in our thoughts. They are not only used in viewing the world but in molding our thoughts. The revised edition by Lakoff and Johnson (2003) expand on the embodied nature of metaphor and its cultural variability. Metaphors such as life is journey can actually govern the way we think about life: we set goals we want to reach, we do our best to reach those goals preparing our thoughts and minds in case obstacles are met.

Casasanto (2019) posited that conceptual metaphor theory attributes meaning to abstract ideas through metaphorical connection and has been conceptualized within the terms of bound and space, has moved to cover areas such as the dynamic nature of metaphor usage and the role they perform as cognitive devices in audiovisual cinematic communication. This indicates a critical analysis of how connected mental ideas of the world are transformed into clear images as well as giving understanding of time and space that transcends beyond mere sequential evolution. In response to the psychoanalytic-semiotic theoretical paradigm, the fundamental study and theoretical principles of conceptual metaphor theory has laid the premise for the establishment of cognitive film theory and in turn, it has become a catalyst within the broad scope of cognitive media studies.

Fairclough (2015) argues that language is not neutral—it is a social practice deeply intertwined with power relations and ideology.

Notwithstanding, its significance the theory has been subjected to objection based on its deficiency in providing detailed insight on how research should be carried out and concise guidelines for conducting evaluation in a systematic manner that can be emulated by others (Paulo, 2020). A key objection raised against the theory stems from the acknowledgement that one metaphorical expression can be connected with multifaceted conceptual metaphors, instead of being connected to just one specific meaning or interpretation. The standard definition of conceptual metaphor theory entails analyzing one domain of experience by linking to concrete one. Also, this definition went further to provide insight on the two elements of conceptual metaphor which are the cognitive process of understanding (process aspect) and the product aspect (resulting conceptual pattern connected by metaphor).

The conceptual metaphor theory is made up both the source domain which is a concrete domain used to interpret abstract or less tangible ideas known as target example. Looking at the conceptual metaphor theory and how these two domains apply, for instance Life is a Journey is an example of conceptual metaphor theory. Also, Life is a Journey appears to be more of a tangible and concrete domain than abstract concept of life. Thus, Journey is considered as the source domain in this metaphor, Life is a Journey. In this sense, conceptual metaphor theory asserts that concrete or tangible domains serve as a source domain for more abstract concepts in metaphor. This conclusion

is derived from the examination of multiple conceptual metaphors seen in existing literatures, examples of which include metaphors such as Life is a Journey, Anger is Fire, and Theories are Building. Feldman (2016) mentioned that the belief that most conceptual metaphors use tangible domains as sources and abstract domains as targets is naturally comprehensible. For example, Life is complex and abstract, anger is an internal emotion, and theory is an intricate mental construction, which conforms to this assumption or belief. In line with the above example, an abstract or non-concrete idea (the target) is conceptualized as and views more of concrete and articulated comprehensible concepts (source). Vicente (2020) posited that this entry provides a clear understanding of abstract concepts by connecting it with something that is more tangible and physical.

In an attempt to comprehend the world, it is more rationale and reasonable to perceive abstract ideas or less complex ideas to interpret domains in terms of concrete which is easy to comprehend and more straightforward. Ning (2018) posited that this method enables easy comprehension of intricate ideas by connecting complex ideas with a more understandable and straightforward concept. Taking cognizance of the oddness and lack of inherent clarity in an attempt to metaphorically comprehend concepts such as Journey as life, anger as fire, buildings as theories, this approach does provide clarity or insights because we already have a comprehensible understanding and usage of journeys, fire and building compared to non-concrete concepts of life, anger and theories. In other words, it is right to say that metaphorical expressions go for non-concrete concepts to more physical concepts such instances are commonly held back specific cases such as artistic, poetic or stylistic purposes, instead of being the established procedure. This common entry of metaphorical conceptualizes happens to be more of realistic and more of non-concrete concepts in our daily life situations.

According to the conceptual metaphor theory, metaphors stay not only in linguistic usage but also to process thought. They are not only seen in speech but also in cognitive activities, as we conceptualize and explore other aspects of the world. Conceptual metaphor theory draws a distinction between languages metaphors which are metaphorical terms used in communication, and conceptual metaphors which are fundamental patterns of thought we use in our daily communication to comprehend the dynamic nature of the world. As noted in the metaphorical example that Life is a Journey, shapes our perception about life. It proposes that way we view life using metaphorical concepts; we tend to have the capacity of set goals, create futuristic plans and navigate complex challenges, consider long-lasting option, and make preferences that suit our understanding about the journey we intend to embark on. This metaphorical expression shapes our thoughts about life and influences the way we communicate about it thereby using the language that connects our journey to describes our experiences and vision.

Basically, metaphor takes place in form of a thought (Reddy, 2013). The idea of thinking about one domain in the aspects of another can have different meanings. First and foremost, individuals may be influenced by a particular conceptual metaphor, for instance, 'JOURNEY' in how they interpret a particular domain, such as Life. Secondly, individuals may use the consequences related to a domain, for example, journey in a conceptual metaphor and apply it to a different domain such as life in their way of thinking. Next, during the process of establishing or conceptualizing a linguistic metaphor, both the source and targets concepts are employed, thereby creating a more comprehensive and usage of the metaphor. One of the key implications of the belief that metaphors are conceptual is that we tend to understand and view certain things in a metaphorical way. As a

result, our conceptual belief shapes our behaviour and how we communicate with the environment, ultimately, we tend to always behave in acts that conform to these metaphorical conceptions.

More so, when we metaphorical comprehend an abstract or non-concrete idea by attributing it to a more tangible concept, we form a metaphorical experience. For instance, imagining life as a journey versus viewing it as movie world, as portrayed by Shakespeare's in his quote: "The entire world is a stage/ men and women are merely players" this reads that human beings have different views about life. These different views emanated from different metaphorical experiences, ultimately influencing the way we think, reason, and comprehend the universal. Ortony (2013) submitted that when incorporating a new metaphorical idea (source domain) to a particular idea or notion (target domain) it changes our thought around the target domain. At times, the use of metaphorical ideas has the capacity to develop the target domain even though it has never existed before. This entry can be seen in the creations of words such as 'comprehension', which being an abstracts applies to a metaphorical cognition of the word "grasping". With this understanding, we see that metaphorical concepts shape the use of language and conceptualization.

Furthermore, if metaphor is associated with the way we think and conceptualize ideas, then conceptual metaphor can be seen in any form of communication in that system. Studies have also indicated that conceptual metaphors seen in language also portray gestures, visual representation, such as cartoons, visual image, like paintings, and other forms of communication. While the metaphors in these forms of communication may not be fully expressed in our day-to-day conversation and perception, many of them share or have something in common (Keysar, 1992) Moving forward, conceptual metaphor has its foundation premises in human understanding and perception (Matthew, 2007). Conceptual metaphor theory provides a profound insights and rationale for the development of these metaphors.

Let's take another example of conceptual metaphor theory "INTENSITY IN HEAT". This metaphor indicates that a general term for various specific terms such as "ANGER IS FIRE", "EUTHUSIASM IS FIRE" and "CONFLICTS IS FIRE". Regardless of the differences between the concepts of intensity and heat, Conceptual Metaphor Theory posits that there is a connection between these concepts based on our experiences. This connection between heat and intensity stands as the foundation for using "HEAT", and it is the metaphorical root for "INTENSITY" notwithstanding the fact that "HEAT" is a more tangible and concrete term. Conceptual metaphor of this nature is known as "primary metaphor" as coined by Lakoff and Johnson, who got the term from Joe Grady, who introduce various metaphors such as, "SIMILARITY IS CLOSENESS", "PERSISTENCE IS BEING ERECT". Grady also reviewed various conceptual metaphor, themes and scope developed by Lakoff and Johnson in his early work of studies, proposing that various primary metaphors can be brought together to create compound metaphors such as "PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY" based on metaphors such as "PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS" and "DIFFICULTIES ARE IMPEDIMENTS."

Projecting forward, many conceptual metaphors covering both similar ones and primary metaphor are established on "image schemas". These schemas are abstract, preconceptual framework that emanates from repetitive instances in the world. Example of these image schemas includes CONTAINER, SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, FORCE, VERTICALITY, and so on. To give further illustration of these metaphors, are STATES ARE CONTAINERS" stems from the CONTAINER

image schema, "LIFE IS A JOURNEY" from the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema, "EMOTIONS ARE FORCES" from the FORCE schema, and so on.

The studies carried out on primary metaphor have spurred a sense of inquiry into comprehending how metaphors interact with the brain at a neural level. Lakoff (2008) initiated a “neutral metaphor theory”. This neutral theory proposes that individuals neural in the brains forms group referred to as “nodes” with distinctive types of neural circuits joining them together. In the mapping circuits, features of metaphor, there are two pairs of nodes showing the source and target domains, with the circuitry between them communicating to the correspondence or connections. In primary metaphors, one pair of nodes illustrates or sensory or motor experience in the brain, while the other pair indicates abstract or subjective approaches (Haser, 2015). It might interest us to know that the conceptual metaphor theory was establishment within the context of cognitive linguistics, a growing field formed in 1970’s.

The conceptual metaphor theory has been simplified into other metaphorical theory by various scholars. Let’s take a look at each of these metaphorical theories:

a. Max Black: Max Black initiated his theory of metaphor in two essays: Metaphor (1962) and More about Metaphor (1993). He called his theory an interaction theory. According to Max Black theory, the central message of his theory is to address the question of how to distinguish metaphor from other areas of figurative expression and examine the “misery of metaphor” which derives its roots from absurdity and misconception when analyzed in its literal meaning. Black objected the general conception that metaphor should frequently be eschewed and disputed with the notion that literal language should be easy to comprehend while metaphorical language seems to be stem from traditional language use and organically posing difficulties or challenges. According to Black, metaphors are designed using the rules of a language community, resulting in non-conventional standards straying from conventional syntactic and semantic rules, which is substantial issue for metaphor scholars to explain or comprehend. He went further to state that metaphor development entails rule breaking, although it is welcomed by other fellows of the speech community. Black in his work formulated two concepts of metaphor namely; emphasis and resonance. A metaphor is said to be emphatic when the creator demands for a specific meaning, eschewed variation, for instance changes in focus, as such changes could misdirect the real meaning of the metaphor. On the other hand, a metaphor is said to be resonance when it has a greater degree of implication. Emphasis and resonance interconnect

b. John Searle Theory: His theory connects to his Speech Act Theory and it is known as Pragmatic theory by Lycan (2004, 2009). While kick-starting his investigation, the scholar anchored his belief on the concept of linguistic phenomenon, he initiated several questions which he believes are valuable and profound for developing a theory that significantly describes the distinctive nature of conceptual metaphor (Searle, 1993) Searle’s viewpoint about metaphor is that he clearly believes that it is a linguistic metaphor, contradicting it literal meaning physically express their real meaning. While Searle asserts that metaphorical expression can be reformulated into a literal understanding, he welcomes that the rewritten one often go below expectation when capturing the real meaning or impact of the metaphor. At times, it can be very challenging to identify a particular paraphrase word that can fits into the intended meaning of the metaphor. This significant challenge underlines the importance of metaphor, and it also helps in closing the disparity where literal

meaning has a loophole, ultimately improving our capacity to convey our ideas or express our thought effectively.

Searle's went further to state when applying the metaphorical theory there is no criteria for that verbally states or contend a similarity between the two ideas being compared. Rather, he proposed that the idea of similarity stems from the creation process and understanding metaphors, instead of coming from the literal intended meaning of those words. Searle's recognizes metaphor and other figurative words such as indirect speech Act or irony stemming from the disparities between the real meanings of the speaker's utterance and the literal meaning of the sentence employed. Although, this is a contrary view to some other scholars of metaphors, Searle is not arguing the existence of two different types of sentence meaning (literal and metaphorical meaning) but rather he views them as arising from the same key defining element of linguistic mechanism.

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory significantly varies from the conventional theory by asserting that metaphor is not just based on linguistic but is also determined by the individual thoughts and way of doing things in their daily activities and experiences as submitted by Lakoff and Johnson. In conceptual metaphor theory, metaphor reflects a distinctive degree of importance. Sarah (2014) stated that in the concept of conceptual metaphor theory, metaphor plays a critical role in the way we think and behave because they are fundamental to established concepts. Concepts which are integral to how both human and animals behave and understand their environment, depend heavily on metaphors for processing and constructing information (Yu, 2018). In carrying out our daily activities, individuals are generally clueless of conceptual organization that takes place in their brain. Semino (2018) mentioned that to understand conceptual metaphor theory, it is highly important for us to take cognizance of these facts; the human brain is influenced by concepts and these concepts functions subconsciously. If truly these concepts operate subconsciously, how then can Lakoff and Johnson provide solid evidence to support their assertion? Lakoff and Johnson contended that the evidence for conceptual organization can be seen in language. By interpreting the ways in which language is constructed and the metaphors its uses, Lakoff and Johnson contended that they can reflect the extent upon which our conceptual system is metaphorical in nature.

Projecting forward, metaphorical statement is not just based on language but it is a fundamental aspect that shape the way human thinks and acts in their daily lives, even though they may not consciously observe at that point in time (Reddy, 2019). In "Metaphors We Live By," Lakoff and Johnson provided a solid evidence to prove their theories about the overreaching significance of metaphor in human cognitive and behaviour. For example, ARGUMENT IS WAR is a metaphorical expression generally employed in language. During the course of the study, concepts will be emphasized by writing them in capital letters, and linguistic metaphor will be represented using spelling to italicize it. This method underscores the importance of metaphorical thinking in comprehending and analyzing different aspects of human experience (Gibbs, 2019). The widespread of influence of the metaphor: "ARGUMENT IS WAR" transcends beyond mere linguistic expression. It stipulates that when it comes to war, people does not only use war-related vocabulary to deliberate about a particular issue but also it can be used to construct or organize the argument themselves as though they were entering the warfare. Invariably, the concepts of metaphor does not just shape the way an arguments is presented but rather it influences our thinking faculty, approach, and organize arguments, inculcating them with inherent qualities and dynamics related to warfare, such as winning, losing, attacking and defending. This entry

highlights the totality of metaphor in our daily communication and thought processes. It suggests that individuals oftentimes use metaphors in their actions and thoughts without having knowledge about it. For instance, your claims are indefensible indicates how metaphorical word is used without having explicit knowledge or idea of its usage. Steen (2017) posited that the essence of metaphor lies in its potential to comprehend and analyze one concept or idea to another. Metaphors enable individuals to perceive or envisioned abstract ideas by deducing patterns that are similar to it or tangible concepts.

Systematically, Kövecses (2017) posited that one of the key arguments of conceptual metaphor theory which is metaphorical expressions such as “ARGUMENT IS WAR” is structured in a systematic order. Put differently, within the contexts of conceptual metaphor theory, it is stated that these metaphorical connections are methodical but rather they wired to follow a particular pattern or composition. Additionally, the systematic approach goes beyond the conceptual metaphor itself to the way people perceive and relate to various aspects associated with the concepts involve. Thus, metaphorical expressions are not only systematic in their organization, but the statements and vocabulary people employs to explain these concepts also reflect a degree of systematicity in line with the key defining elements of metaphors.

Lakoff and Johnson asserted that since metaphorical concepts in language are systematically attributed to metaphorical concepts, examining these linguistic expressions can provide a valuable guide into the dynamics of metaphor and help individuals to comprehend the metaphorical nature of human experiences. In clearer terms when people employ metaphorical expression such as “ARGUMENT IS WAR” it embodies fundamental metaphorical concepts such as seeing argument as warfare. Lakoff and Johnson contended that by analyzing these linguistics concepts and the metaphor they reflect, we gain an in-depth understanding of the how metaphor shapes the way people perceives, interact and network with one another in activities. Significantly, language serves as a gate way in providing information on how metaphorical concepts influence human perceptions and actions (Rezanova, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive research design that involves collecting and transcribing selected speeches from media archives, government sources, and public recordings. The speeches are qualitatively analyzed using CMT and CDA to uncover their linguistic, stylistic, and cognitive features. In the CDA analysis, attention is given to discursive strategies, power relations, and ideological content, while the CMT analysis focuses on metaphorical mappings that illustrate how abstract political ideas are expressed through tangible concepts. The study also examines how metaphors foster emotional unity and national cohesion.

The grammatical analysis covers syntax, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse structures. It focuses on how Diri uses grammatical features—such as tense, modality, and speech acts—to enhance persuasion and meaning. The study also identifies grammatical metaphors that simplify complex political ideas, consistent with Halliday’s (2004) view of grammar as a meaning-making system.

The presentation follows an academic and analytical style, with organized sections, logical flow, and appropriate citations. The tone is formal and objective, ensuring clarity and coherence in presenting findings and interpretations.

The speeches are categorized by theme, topic, and time period to facilitate comparative analysis. This categorization enables the researcher to highlight variations in Diri’s linguistic and stylistic

choices across different political contexts, offering insights into how language is strategically used to communicate his vision and ideology.

ANALYSIS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study offers an in-depth linguistic and discourse analysis of selected political speeches delivered by Senator Douye Diri, the Executive Governor of Bayelsa State. Grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the research investigates how language functions as a tool for meaning-making, ideological construction, and persuasion in the socio-political context of Bayelsa State. Through these theoretical perspectives, the study reveals how rhetorical and metaphorical strategies serve to articulate governance ideals, foster social unity, legitimize authority, and instill hope among the populace.

The research adopts a descriptive qualitative design, utilizing speeches such as “*The Budget of Growth 2021*,” inaugural addresses, and educational policy statements. These speeches were selected to represent key areas of governance and public communication. The analysis focuses on identifying linguistic patterns, rhetorical techniques, and metaphorical representations that reflect the governor’s communicative goals and ideological stance.

Rather than viewing these speeches as routine political rhetoric, the study interprets them as deliberately structured linguistic performances that embody cognitive, ideological, and social meanings. The language choices reflect not only administrative priorities but also the governor’s vision for collective development and identity formation within Bayelsa State.

Metaphors of Development and Progress

A key discovery from the analysis of “*The Budget of Growth 2021*” is the strategic use of conceptual metaphors to represent development as a continuous, collective journey toward prosperity. The metaphor of “development as a journey” underscores a forward-looking, progressive agenda rooted in continuity and past achievements.

Several other metaphors reinforce this narrative:

Economy as a Garden – depicting growth as the outcome of cultivation, patience, and investment.
Infrastructure as a Catalyst – illustrating the transformative role of projects in stimulating progress.
Flood as an Adversary – personifying natural disasters as obstacles to be conquered through resilience.

Health as Wealth – equating citizens’ well-being with the economic prosperity of the state.

These metaphors translate complex governance challenges into familiar, emotionally resonant images that inspire collective optimism and trust in leadership.

Education as Transformation and Empowerment

Education emerges as another dominant theme in Governor Diri’s speeches. It is frequently conceptualized through metaphors such as Education as a Building and Education as a Stairway to Growth, highlighting its foundational and transformative functions in individual and societal advancement.

By referencing classical thinkers like Aristotle, the governor positions education as both a moral and intellectual pursuit that demands dedication yet yields enduring rewards. CDA of these education-centered speeches reveals an ideological connection between education and economic empowerment, portraying the government as a facilitator of growth and social mobility. The

repeated use of collective pronouns—“we will,” “our administration”—reinforces shared responsibility and inclusivity while simultaneously asserting leadership commitment.

Metaphors of Unity, Morality, and Divine Guidance

In his inaugural and policy speeches, Governor Diri uses metaphors such as State as a Family, Governance as Service, and Bayelsa as a Promise Land to construct a narrative grounded in compassion, unity, and divine purpose. The metaphor of Love as a Guiding Principle, emphasized through his symbolic reference to Valentine’s Day, reflects an appeal to reconciliation and social harmony in the aftermath of political contestation.

CDA reveals that these speeches blend religious, moral, and communal imagery, creating a moral framework through which leadership is portrayed as service to the people and obedience to divine will. Phrases such as “*brothers and sisters*,” “*we have come to serve*,” and “*let us eschew bitterness*” invoke inclusivity and empathy, fostering emotional connection and legitimacy.

Justice, Security, and Governance

The analysis of speeches centered on justice and security introduces metaphors like Justice as a Foundation for Peace and Security as an Enabler of Justice. These metaphors present governance as a balanced system in which peace, justice, and stability are interdependent. By using assertive expressions such as “*the long arm of the law will catch up with them*,” Governor Diri portrays law enforcement as both a moral imperative and a symbol of accountability.

This linguistic framing projects an image of a just and transparent government committed to protecting its citizens and promoting sustainable peace. The association of justice and security with freedom and prosperity strengthens the ideological link between governance, morality, and the collective good.

Language as a Tool of Ideology and Governance

Overall, the study establishes that language in Governor Diri’s speeches functions beyond mere communication—it operates as an instrument of governance, persuasion, and ideological reinforcement. Through deliberate metaphorical and discursive choices, the governor constructs a vision of leadership rooted in unity, accountability, and social progress. CDA and CMT jointly reveal how linguistic structures encode deeper cognitive and cultural meanings that align with shared community values and aspirations.

Conclusion and Practical Implications

The research enriches scholarly understanding of how political language in Nigeria intertwines with ideology, identity, and leadership communication. It contributes to the fields of political linguistics, discourse analysis, and communication studies by demonstrating how speeches act as sites of ideological negotiation and identity construction.

Practically, the findings emphasize that effective political communication requires rhetorical coherence, moral appeal, and metaphorical richness. These linguistic strategies not only persuade but also build enduring trust and solidarity between leaders and citizens.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study recommends that future inquiries expand the analysis of political discourse to digital communication platforms, particularly social media, where political language continues to evolve

dynamically. Exploring how metaphors and rhetorical patterns function in online environments—such as hashtags, memes, and viral political content—would enhance understanding of how modern political narratives are constructed, contested, and circulated in the digital age.

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