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Ladies and gentlemen

Introduction

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir. I deeply appreciate you and the Management for the freshness and life you have brought to Federal University Lokoja since your appointment as Vice-Chancellor by strengthening and further deepening the Inaugural Lecture culture. I am grateful for the opportunity given to me on this platform to share my scholarly experience as a linguist and a discourse analyst. My lecture is not meant to be a sermon. The fact that the title inter-textually makes reference to a biblical verse,

shows that language is not neutral. Rather, much of what we say has reference to other texts that have been created before ours. It also captures for me the essence of my presentation: that the mind is the incubator of thought, and thought is manifested in language. Therefore, the import of my discussion is to show that beyond what is said on the surface, a critical scrutiny can reveal the hidden thought behind every utterance.

What is Language?

I have decided to open up this conversation with an explanation of what language is for two reasons. First, language has been generally accepted as one of the most defining features of our humanity as Homo sapiens, which stands us out from the other creatures. Secondly, and as a possible consequence of the first, I am of the opinion that language in its various forms and manifestations has remained the primary focus of the linguistic discipline, the pragmatic component of which has been my pursuit for nearly three decades now. Like other concepts and terms in the intellectual enterprise, and because

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of its rich and multifaceted interface with almost all domains of human endeavour, language has been defined by many scholars from various perspectives, depending of course, on their research agenda. Permit me at this juncture to quote some definitions of language by some of the outstanding scholars in the discipline:

Language is a speech sound produced by human beings to express their ideas, emotions, thoughts, desires and feelings. **Aristotle**

Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires through a system of voluntarily produced sounds. **Sapir**

The totality of the utterances that can be made in a speech community is the language of that speech community. **Bloomfield**

Language is a means by which people communicate their thoughts, intentions, expressions and experiences **Crystal**.

As can be seen above, language is distinctively human and ranks as the most advanced form of communication. The complexity of language resides not only in its production, perception and comprehension but also in its use. People from birth, through crying and cooing (age 0-6 months), babbling (age 6-months to one and a half years), holophrasing (one and a half years to two years), telegraphing (two years to two and a half years) and true speaking (age three to six years) produce, use and understand language subconsciously without hesitation even if the acts are warranted ad-libbed. Chomsky (1986) states that language is an instinct with its many parts built-in, or innate, much of which is an ability hard-wired into our brains by our genes. This claim is, in my view, what arguably accentuates the sub-consciousness attributed to the production, use and understanding of language by humans.

Humans process language in different ways, i.e., processing for production and comprehension, whether in its written or spoken form. According to Garman (1990), these processes are best thought of and described as microgenesis of language, which

refers to the rapid, moment-by-moment nature of everyday language processes by virtue of which we understand and produce utterances on a time scale that is marked off in seconds and milli-seconds. Processing for production, on the one hand, starts with the generation of linguistic signals, while processing for comprehension is a mental phenomenon that manifests in the minds of the speaker and hearer. These processes are achievable when the articulatory and receptive organs toe the brain line and transform signs and signals into meaningful and distinguishable forms. As straightforward as these processes seem, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, it is worth highlighting from the outset of this lecture that language differs fundamentally from communication found in the animal kingdom. In what follows, I shall offer a treatise on where the differences lie.

What Makes Language Unique from other Means of Communication?

The difference between language and other means of communication is best understood against

the backdrop of the difference between communication and language. Whereas communication, as defined by Mclean (2005), is the act of "purposely and actively exchanging information between two or more people to convey the intended meanings…", language is only one out of several other means of facilitating communication. This definition presupposes that there are forms of communication that do not require the agency of language. Thus, broadly, we have "language-based communication" and "non-language-based communication". For example, dogs bark, lions roar, cats meow, cows moo, crickets chirp, snakes hiss, to communicate certain information that could range from asserting territorial supremacy, expressing fear, delight, hunger, etc. These acts do not constitute language-based communication. Some of the defining features that distinguish language from communication include:

a. Social phenomenon: Through language, day to day interaction is possible among humans.

b. Arbitrariness: This means there is no natural connection between a word or a sound and the thing it represents.

c. Displacement: This feature enables speakers to talk about not only what is happening at the place or time of speaking, but also about other situations, the future, the past, real or unreal phenomena.

d. Productivity: In this feature of language, infinite number of words and sentences are capable of being produced by humans, including what they have never produced or uttered before.

e. Learnability: Language is predisposed to being learnt by humans.

Levels of Linguistic Analysis

It could be argued that the various levels of linguistic analysis-substance, form and meaning carry inherent biases in use. They are imbued with the language user's inherent, individualised meaning, which must be situated within the current of society's accepted norms of communication. This

means that each individual draws from the reservoir of linguistic resources of the society and deploys language based on the needs of the speech event. This analogy presupposes that language is a needs-resource that users deploy as the instantiation of thought. This, therefore, justifies the distinction between sentence and utterance. Linguists recognise utterances as the bedrock of communication. While the sentence in the strict Chomskyan tradition is a set of abstract rules which are capable of generating an infinite number of structures, the utterance is the instantiation of the sentence in actual communication situations. This means that a sentence said at different times, instantiates different meanings. Some analysts have discussed the two levels of analysis in language as the micro and macro levels of linguistic analysis. While the structuralist is concerned mainly with the micro level of linguistic analysis, the discourse analyst is concerned with the macro level. When structural linguists talk about the creativity of language, reference is made to the finite rules of sentence formation which are capable of generating an infinite number of sentences in the

language. However, the generativists' conception of language or structural creativity pales into insignificance when compared to the content-sensitive potential of the sentence as the instantiation of speech, human utterance, which constitutes the core of the pragmaticist's or discourse analyst's interest in language.

My position on the subject matter is that every instantiated sentence is a candidate for interpretation based on the parameters of context. If we extend this argument to the Austinian concept of speech acts, it could be seen that the speaker's intention and to a large extent, the hearers' understanding of the text is a significant determinant of meaning. This means that in the Austinian view, humans do things with words, and it is what we conceive of these words, that they mean. We can still stretch this argument further by asking if language is this personalised and individualised; what is the place of the community-negotiated conventional property of language? The answer to the question resides in the tenets of the cooperative principles

enunciated by Grice (1975) and other scholars who have worked in the same general area of linguistic enquiry. In Ibileye (1994), I have argued that it is the agreement to cooperate that imbues an utterance with its meaning, that is in addition to the syntactic and other formal properties of the structure used. On the basis of this argument, I consider the discourse analyst's preoccupation with the utterance and its various manifestations as the raw materials or the building blocks of communication. In other words, the syntactic and other formal structures of language serve as input devices for the interpretation which discourse analysts and pragmaticists do. This implies that the discourse or pragmatic structure of an utterance is not entirely independent of the formal properties of the sentence used.

I was initially fascinated by the beauty and analytical rigour of the structural methodology of Discourse Analysis and Conversational Analysis, with which I analysed my M. A. Thesis "Discourse Analysis of Courtroom Conversation". However, I have progressively realised that mere structural

analysis of discourse using the earlier resources of the linguistic approach to Discourse Analysis as enshrined in the works of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), is not in itself sufficient or adequately revealing of the endless creativity and productivity of language above the sentence level, where I believe the quintessence of communication resides. Language is integrative; perhaps one of its most distinctive characteristics which has not sufficiently been highlighted in scholarship. The integrative nature of language ensures that the *Langue* component of the dichotomy between Langue and Parole (in the classical Saussarean tradition) or that of competence between Chomsky's *Competence* and *Performance*, that is the formal property of language, harmonises with the speaker, the speaker's intention and context of utterance as well as with the universe of knowledge of the hearer/listener/reader. Without these parameters, the language itself is without meaning. Perhaps the most central of the highlighted features of language, the cognitive/thought processes of the participants: speaker/writer and hearer/reader deserve critical

interrogation. In this regard, it is important to stress that a locution in itself is without meaning except the meaning it is imbued by the speaker and perhaps the meaning deduced by the hearer/reader based on their jointly negotiated common grounds. "I love that" as a syntactic structure for instance, is without meaning except it is situated within the context of the speaker's intention or relationship with the hearer and the general psycho-physical circumstance of the utterance. The utterance, said by a girl to a boy with whom she plays regularly, after he had smacked her playfully might coincide with the import of the syntactic structure. But when it is said by a girl to a boy who had smacked her and with whom she shares no such fond relationship, the expression could be construed as a threat.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I sometimes find members of my family, my wife and children, supplying me with rich and qualitative unsolicited linguistic data, which they themselves are unconscious of. For example, if my wife asks after

both of us had returned from a stressful day at work and she had complained of being tired:

Should I make rice or pounded yam for you?

I will be insensitive to my training in pragmatics to go for pounded yam considering the thematic prominence she has given to rice in the utterance. The immediate and wider socio-cultural contextual setting of the utterance further buttresses this assumption. As a typical Okun person, pounded yam is elevated beyond the realms of an ordinary meal; it is desired and craved for. Therefore, knowing that I would prefer pounded yam to rice, yet still fronting rice in the utterance (probably) shows she prefers for me to eat rice rather than pounded yam. This phenomenon, is broadly referred to as thematisation or topicalisation which Mardani (2016) defines as the process of arranging theme, rheme patterns in a text. Halliday (2004) argues that each clause conveys a message that has two parts, i.e., what comes first or the theme, and what comes last or the rheme. The theme usually contains given information and the rheme, new information. I believe that this

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subconscious arrangement of information is central to the comprehension of meaning in discourse.

One of the classical examples used by J.L. Austin and which has some resonance in the literature of the subject to explicate this is: "There are five large bulls in the field". This expression, except situated within context, and the speaker's imbued illocutionary force, does not have any meaning. Enriched with these pragmatic ingredients, the meaning can be variegated, multifarious and diverse. For instance, it could be a promise, a threat, a boast, a statement of fact, an invitation etc. Assuming I am owing you the sum of ₦150,000.00 which I have defaulted in paying and you come to recover your money, I could point to the field containing my cattle to make you a promise. If the field is my father's for instance, I could make the expression to boast, and it could also be used to cajole a petulant child to prevent him from wandering into the field as well as used as a mere statement of fact.

According to Butari (2017) the above discourse presupposes that in every discourse, there

is basic information that the interactants are expected to share in order to understand each other. In pragmatics, such information is known as Mutual Contextual Belief (MCB). The major thrust of MCB is that in any speech event, a speaker has an intention and the listener or hearer will make some inference in which both of them will base their role on certain basic facts shared by them. Bach and Harnish (1979) propose that in general, the inference made by the hearer and the inference he takes himself to be intended to make is based not just on what the speaker says but on MCB's salient information from the context known to both speaker and hearer. They further state that "…the speakers' intention and hearers' inferences must be mutual if communication is to take place". In inferring what the speaker is saying, the hearer also relies on the Presumption of Literalness (PL) that is, if the speaker could (under the circumstances) be speaking literally, then the speaker is speaking literally. Conversely, if it is evident to the hearer that the speaker could not be speaking literally, the speaker supposes the hearer to be speaking non-literally and therefore seeks to

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identify what the non-literal illocutionary act is. The theory further makes a distinction between conventional illocutionary acts and communicative illocutionary acts. The former, accordingly needs no communicative intentions, as success in the communication transaction is a matter of convention, and not intention. In communicative illocutionary acts, however, the speaker's intentions accompany the acts, and the recognition of such intention by the hearer is pivotal to the success of the act. At the level of language, meaningful communication can only take place when the interactants have access to the language of communication while at the level of situation, the life experience of the interactants including shared code, linguistic or non-linguistic come to play. Hudson (1983:77) identifies three kinds of knowledge that interactants need to share in any given situation: (i) Cultural knowledge: This is learned from other people whom we create because we see that other people around us make use of them in their thinking. (ii) Shared non-cultural knowledge: This knowledge is shared by people within the same community or the world over, but is not learned from

each other (this is built without reference to other people as a convenient way of interpreting our experience). (iii) Non-shared non-cultural knowledge: This is unique to the individual.

It could be assumed, erroneously though, that only our locutions, what we say, bear meaning. This is farther from the reality of human language as what is left unsaid, against the expectations of interlocutors, could be as meaningful as what is said, asserted, interrogated, denied and so on. For instance, in a two-part question, "Have you done and submitted your homework?", a response such as "I have submitted it" could presuppose that the speaker did not do the homework himself - someone else probably did it on his behalf. Such two-part questions which are answered in this way typify the speaker's attitude and deliberateness in conversation, and should not be taken for granted in analysis.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, it is instructive to characterise the goals of pragmatics as a subfield of linguistics. In this respect, I am in agreement with

Adegbija (1998) that identifies the following as the goals of pragmatic enquiry:

a) To explain how utterances convey meaning in context;
b) To explain how meaning is decoded from utterances in context in particular situation;
c) To explain how context contribute to the encoding and decoding of meaning;
d) To explain how speakers and hearers of utterances perceive them as conveying the meaning they are considered as conveying in particular utterances;
e) To explain how speakers can say one thing and mean something else;
f) To explain how deductions are made in context with respect to what meaning has been decoded in a particular utterance.

Indexical expressions, deixis or deictic expressions are fertile grounds for the manifestation of the intentions and thoughts of the individual speaker to manifest. Deixis are words such as personal pronouns 'I', 'we', 'you', 'they' and place

deixis such as 'here', 'there', time deixis such as 'now', 'then'; and certain verbs of orientation such as 'come', 'go' etc. Finegan and Desnier (1989:193) define deixis as the marking of the orientation or position of objects and events with respect to certain points of reference. According to Yule (2005), the deictic expressions have to be interpreted in terms of what person, place or time the speaker has in mind. For instance, there is a broad distinction between what is marked as close to the speaker (this, here, now) and what is marked as distant (that, there, then). It is also possible, according to Yule (2005) to mark whether movement is happening towards the speaker's location (come) or away from the speaker's location (go). I have noted in Ibileye (2008) that the tendency of the speaker to see the world from his/her standpoint suggests that indexicals reflect the egocentricity of much of language. This shows that speakers orientate their conversational exchanges towards their standpoint and thereby direct the listener's attention towards this point.

It can generally be affirmed that the use of indexicals in mobile telephone conversations differs markedly from their use in other language situations. The two interlocutors in the text below, were colleagues in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. While Gbenga was in Makurdi, Benue State on a brief assignment, Ode was, at the moment of speaking at Abaji on his way to attend a colleague's burial at Onitsha, which is farther away from Zaria and Abaji. Therefore, when Ode says in his third utterance, "when are you coming back", he uses 'coming back' to re-orient the zero point of the utterance to Zaria, believing that since both interlocutors mutually know that they both have Zaria as the location to which they would return, then 'coming back' means 'to Zaria'. However, ordinarily, 'coming back' would have presumed that Ode was in Zaria and that Gbenga was returning to that location. In other words, Ode's assumed zero point in this utterance is Zaria and not Abaji. The utterance could therefore, be interpreted as "whereas I'm in Abaji and whereas you are in Makurdi, I'm asking you when you'll be coming back to Zaria and not to Abaji, since we both

know that we're supposed to be returning to Zaria and not to Abaji. I want you therefore, to believe that I'm in Zaria and not in Abaji.

Ode: Hello

Gbenga: Oga sir, how're you?

Ode: Where are you? You still dey Makurdi?

Gbenga: Yes, I still have quite a lot of work to do here. What of you, where are you now?

Ode: We're...ehm...somewhere in Abaji...on our way to Onitsha for Georges's burial. So, when are you coming back?

Gbenga: To where? Where did you say you are? Abaji?

Ode: I mean, when are you going back to Zaria?

Gbenga: I guess that'll be first thing tomorrow, if I'm able to finish in good time here. Okay, take care then and thanks for calling.

Ode: Bye.

Language, the Brain, and the Mind

Having established the levels of linguistic analysis, permit me Vice-Chancellor, Sir, to briefly talk about a significant component of this lecture, the relationship between language, the brain, and the mind. To begin with, I want to state that although the brain and the mind are often used interchangeably, they are not the same conceptually, yet they both relate to each other, and by extension, to language in very fundamental ways. Let us take the brain to be that anatomical organ of man within the skull that coordinates and regulates all functions in the body, including language (Sharot Tall, 2018). Neuroscientists have said the brain is divided into the right hemisphere which is responsible for feeling, visualisation and imagination (Aggelopoulos, Franco, and Rolls, 2005; Gennaro, 2000). The left hemisphere functions as the "logical" part of the brain and is the part that regulates language related activities for most humans. This language hemisphere has two compartments known as the *Broca area* responsible for speech production and articulation, and the *Wernicke's area,* responsible for

comprehension. When damage is done to the Broca area of the brain, it results in a language disorder known as Broca's Aphasia. People who suffer from Broca's Aphasia have difficulty in forming complete sentences or understanding sentences. When the damage is to the Wernicke's area, the disorder is called Wernicke's Aphasia, and it manifests, among others ways, in the person's inability to string together meaningful words in the form of a sentence. The mind, according to Jeffrey (2009), is the side effect of electrochemical activities in the physical brain. Put differently, we could say the mind is the cognitive manifestation of the neurological activities of the brain. Thus, whereas the brain is a concrete, palpable anatomical organ of the human body, the mind is abstract and psychological, and so is the site of cognition in the human person. It is therefore the dynamic interplay between the brain, the mind and such linguistic processes as speech production, comprehension, language learning and acquisition that is the focus of the branch of linguistics known as psycholinguistics.

When situated within the context of this lecture, the foregoing shows that the mind, and not the brain, is the organ with which a relationship is being said to exist with language, because it is where cognition resides. Thus, with regards to the title of the lecture, the heart is only a synonym of the mind. It is also in this context that (to digress a bit), Jesus said in Luke chapter 6, verse forty-five (Luke 6:45) that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks". Here, Jesus tells us how we can judge a person's character or intentions using the utterances that emanate from his mind. We do it in much the same way we look at a tree or plant to tell if it is a "good" plant or not: "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognised by its own fruit', Jesus further teaches. What is on the inside – what the tree is really "made of" – will determine the kind of fruit it produces. Jesus says that the same is true of people. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. If a person is angry, rude, lewd or immoral on a regular basis, that is the content of his or her heart but a man or woman who is consistently happy, pleasant,

honest and morally upright or one who is consistently kind, encouraging and polite; then you can be sure that that is what he is like, "on the inside". Of course, it is possible that someone might put up a façade to deceive others regarding his character, but eventually what is inside will be revealed. You cannot lock up flame or vapour in a room for too long a time, it will find its way of escape. The mouth speaks out of the abundance – the overflow- of the heart.

The study of how language influences thought has a long history in a variety of fields. As published by Adegbite (2009, p. 15) the connection between language and thought has raised crucial issues in linguistics which has been summarised in two hypotheses as linguistic relativism and linguistic universal. One body of thought stems from linguistics and it is known as the Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis. There is a strong version of the hypothesis which argues for more or less influence of language and thought. The strong version, *linguistic determinism,* argues that without language there is and can be no thought, while the weak version, *linguistic relativity*, supports the idea that

there are some influences from language and thought. On the opposing side, there are "language of thought" theories (LOTH) which posit that public language is inessential to private thought (though the possibility remains that private thought, when infused with inessential language, diverges in predilection, emphasis, tone, or subsequent recollection). LOTH theories address the debate of whether thought is possible without language which is related to the question of whether language evolved for thought. These ideas are difficult to study because it proves challenging to parse the effects of culture versus thought versus language in all academic fields.

From a general perspective, the main use of language is to transfer thoughts from one mind, to another mind. However, these transfers depend on the worlds from where each user of the language is operating. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis makes a strong claim that language conditions our world view and that different speakers view the world along the lines laid down by their respective languages (Carrol 1956). All we have to discuss about language must

surround the English language in use as we receive utterances from fellow interlocutors in different contexts of human interaction such as, differing experiences in the colour system, kinship terms and general relationships. Amongst the Yoruba, three basic colours represent several colours in English – pupa (red, purple, orange and brown); dudu (black, blue and green); fun-fun (white, grey). For kinship terms: many Nigerian languages have wider meanings for words such as 'father', 'mother', 'brother', 'sister', 'husband' and 'wife' than English does. The following relationships with the world are common amongst us:

a. Yoruba

Ebi n pa mi (Translation) Hunger [progressive marker] kill me

Otutu n mu mi (Translation) Cold (progressive marker) catch me

b. Igbo

Agurunnaagum (Translation) Hunger [progressive marker] beat me

Oyinatum (Translation) Cold [progressive marker] catch me

c. Hausa

*Inajinyunwa* (Translation) I [progressive marker] feel hunger

Inajinsanyi (Translation) I [progressive marker] feel cold

d. English

I am hungry. Or I feel hungry

I have caught cold. Or I have (a) cold

The observation from excerpts above is that while the phenomena of 'hunger' and 'cold' are imbued with agency for Yoruba and Igbo speakers, the Hausa and English speakershave agency over the phenomena. These positions displayed here are suggestive of the world views of the different peoples.
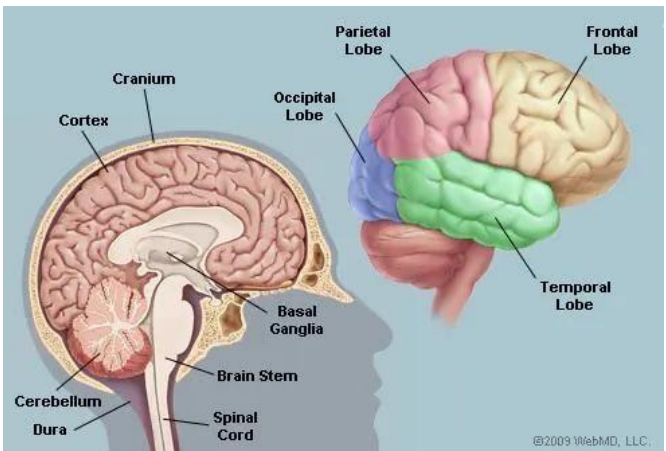
Figure 1. The image of a human brain painted by Matthew Hoffman, MD
Medically Reviewed by <u>Carol DerSarkissian, MD</u> on May 18, 2019 **Image Source:** © 2014 WebMD, LLC. All rights reserved.
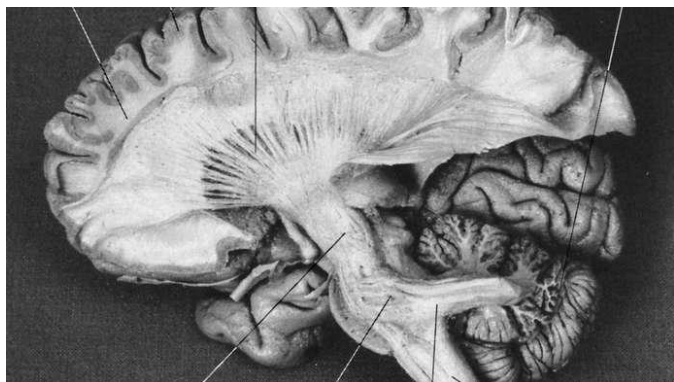
Figure 2. Cerebellum; human brain
Dissection of the left hemisphere of the human brain, showing the internal capsule and middle cerebellar peduncle. *Original preparation by J. Klingler, Anatomical Museum, Basel, Switz.*

Some Cognitive Theories of Language

In order to contextualise the foregoing argument within the purview of linguistics, permit me, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, to examine some cognitive theories of language which should provide

us with the needed framework to analyse the centrality of the mind in language processing. One of the attempts by scholars to trace language to the mind is encapsulated in cognitivism. As a philosophical construct, cognitivism is a theoretical approach to language behaviour that emphasises the role of the mind in language learning. Cognitivism focuses on the mental activities of a language learner and the processes of planning, goal setting and organisational strategies (Ertmer and Newby, 2013). Mage (1988) notes that cognitivism involves the study of mental processes such as sensation, perception, attention, encoding, and memory, and how these affect the way people perceive and interact with the world around them. This scientific orientation about language learning offers a window into the link between language, the mind, and the world, the first two being more theoretically explained by cognitive linguistics. Dąbrowska (2016) explains the relationship between language and the mind, and situates the agenda of cognitive linguistics among three broad claims:

- (a) Language exists to convey meaning; therefore, the goal of linguistics is to explain how speakers use linguistic expressions to convey meaning.
- (b) Account of human language should accord with what is generally known about the mind and the brain from disciplines other than linguistics (Lakoff, 1999, p.5)
- (c) Grammar emerges from usage, and so usage should be centre stage in all accounts of language.

The above tenets of cognitive linguistics (except, perhaps the last one) makes its overall agenda, especially in the early stages of its development to rely more on introspective evidence in its investigation of linguistic phenomena. However, the subjective nature of introspective knowledge and the need to situate linguistic practices within context makes it necessary to integrate pragmatic principles into the cognitive linguistic theory, resulting in what has now come to be known as *Cognitive Pragmatics* (Schmid, 2012).

Cognitive Pragmatic Theory

Some kind of hybrid linguistic theory, Cognitive Pragmatics is defined as "encompassing the study of the cognitive principles and processes involved in the construal of meaning - in – context. The fundamental argument of this integrative linguistic orientation is that the mind (of both the speaker and the listener) must engage with the context in which language is used to be able to adequately harness the meaning of utterances. In Cognitive Pragmatics, communication is believed to be "a cooperative activity between agents who together consciously and intentionally construct the meaning of their interaction" (Bara, 2010). This means that the participants in the communicative event must share a set of basic cognitive assumptions (especially with regards to *beliefs* and *intentions*) about the interaction, and it is on the basis of these shared cognitive assumptions that communication can be said to have been successful. Bara (2010) notes that these shared assumptions facilitate the comprehension of non-standard communication such as deceit, irony, and figurative language. In its

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application, this linguistic orientation, according to Schmid (2012) rests on:

(a)   The cognitive principle of pragmatic competence: This relates to the cognitive underpinnings of language users' ability to compute or infer intended meaning in the role of hearers and to give a hint as to how to decode intended meaning in the role of speakers. The focus here is on the skills needed to arrive at context-dependent meaning of utterances.

(b)   The Psychology of Pragmatics: Here, the focus is on the cognitive activities taking place when meaning is being constructed by co-interactants. Attention is also given to how children develop pragmatic competence and the types of pragmatic disorders or impairments that they are subjected to.

(c)   The emergence of linguistic structures from meaning- in- context: The focus here is on the relationship between linguistic structures and the meaning they

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express with the (social context in which they have been uttered).

Cognitive Metaphor Theory

Also known as conceptual metaphor theory, cognitive metaphor theory was propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). They argue that in terms of our everyday thought, the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured. The theory came to challenge the classical perception of metaphor which restricted its analysis to the domain of poetry and rhetoric. The fundamental argument of the theory is that metaphor operates at the level of thinking; that is, metaphor is a figure of thought rather than of speech (Lakoff 1980). According to the theory, metaphors have two conceptual domains, the ''source domain'' and the "target domain". The source domain comprises a set of literal entities, attributes, processes and relationships linked semantically and apparently stored in the mind. The target domain is abstract, and takes its structure from the source domain through the metaphorical line or "conceptual metaphor". Target domains are therefore believed to have relationship between

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entities, attributes and processes which mirror those found in the source domain. At the level of language, these entities, attributes and processes in the target domain are lexicalised using words and expressions from the source domain.

The theory, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), sets out to investigate the centrality of the role played by our conceptual system in defining our everyday realities. Our concepts, according to the theory, structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to others, consequently making our daily experience a matter of metaphor. Therefore, even though the theory is cognitive in its essence as it tends to situate metaphor within the realm of thought rather than language, the very fact that human communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting makes language an important source of evidence for what that system looks like. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) use a range of examples to illustrate how a concept cannot be metaphorical, but be capable of structuring our everyday activity, consequently determining how our perception of,

and reaction to, such an activity would differ from that of another set of people in whose cognitive domain the concept has a different structuring. They use the concept of ARGUMENT and the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR to show how it is reflected in our daily language by a variety of linguistic expressions.

Argument is War

1. Your claims are *indefensible.*
2. He *attacked* every weak point in my argument.
3. His criticisms were right on *target.*
4. You disagree? Okay, *shoot.*
5. If you use that *strategy*, we'll wipe you out.

The above italicised linguistic metaphors which are derivatives of the ARGUMENT IS WAR conceptual metaphor do not just illustrate the conceptualisation of arguments but also determine what occurs in the process of arguing. Thus, one can *win* or *lose* an argument, *attack* an opponent's points and *defend* one's own. All of these, according to Lakoff and Johnson, would be different in a culture where argument is conceptualised as DANCE, for

instance. The participants in this case, would not be opponents and proponents; but would be performers, and since they are not defending and attacking one another, argument would be viewed differently, talked about differently, carried out differently and consequently, experienced differently.

The same is true with the metaphorical concept TIME IS MONEY from which the following linguistic metaphors are derived:

1. I don't *have* the time to *give* you
2. How do you *spend* your time these days?
3. You're *running out* of them.
4. Is that *worth your while*?
5. Do you *have* much time *left*.
6. You're living on *borrowed* time.
7. You don't use you time *profitably*.

The above metaphorical expressions, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), depict a Western culture where time is a valuable commodity. Because of the way that the concept of work has developed in modern culture where work is typically associated with the time it takes and time is precisely

quantified, it has become customary to pay people by the hour, week, or year. The situation would probably be different where time has a different metaphorical conceptualisation. The argument of Lakoff and Johnson is that the most fundamental value in a culture are usually coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in that culture. Now, let us bring the argument a bit closer home, and permit me, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, to illustrate this within two domains in our country – the domain of religion and the domain of politics. Let us begin with the former, and I want to illustrate with Nigerian Pentecostal Christian sermons. Take a look at the foregrounded metaphors in the following linguistic expressions from the sermons of a popular Nigeran Pentecostal cleric and see how these linguistic metaphors illustrate his conceptualisation of the ideas he talks about.

1. In Shiloh we come to take *delivery* of our inheritance in Christ**. (David Oyedepo)**
2. God's word is the channel for the *delivery*. **(Oyedepo)**

3. Kingdom matters are kingdom *packages*. **(Oyedepo)**

4. Receive grace to take *delivery* of your portion. **(Oyedepo)**

5. As the third day dawns, your series of *packages* will begin to land on you. **(Oyedepo)**

6. Fill out your open *cheque* for your anticipated *packages*. **(Oyedepo)**

7. Faith is the *currency* which we make *transactions* with God (**Oyedepo)**

8. Kingdom matters are matters of *business*; Jesus said I must be about my father's business. (**Oyedepo)**

9. *Paying* your tithe is fulfilling your own side of the *bargain*; it is a kingdom responsibility. (**Oyedepo)**

As you can see, the foregrounded words in the sentences above demonstrate a conceptualisation of **DIVINE BENEFITS AS COMMERCIAL COMMODITIES**. Evidence that this conceptual metaphor resides in the cognitive consciousness of Nigerian Pentecostal clerics and by extension their

followers are the linguistic metaphors in the excerpts. This is further proof, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, that it is as a man thinks in his heart that he speaks to his world. Now, let us see how this plays out in the Nigerian political domain, using excerpts from selected speeches and utterances of some Nigerian political leaders which they made during political campaigns.

1. *"If what happened in 2011 (alleged rigging) should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the **dog and the baboon** would all be soaked in blood."* (Muhammadu Buhari).

2. *I appeal to our supporter to celebrate this **victory** with prayers* (Muhammadu Buhari)

3. "This is a **fight** against the **dark forces** of PDP. The nation is held **hostage** to their greed for too long (Goodluck Jonathan)

4. We will **fight** for justice! We will **fight** for all Nigerians to have access to power! **We will fight** corruption! We will **fight** to protect all Citizens! (Goodluck Jonathan)

5. "This election is more than a **contest** between two men, President Muhammadu Buhari and

former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, for that one exalted chair. (**Tinubu**)

6. We **standagainst** those whose commerce is bigotry and hatred. We **contend** against those who would render the people ignorant and poor," (Tinubu)

7. Those who detest progress **fought** severely against us. And they are still **fighting**. Tinubu

8. They are **retreating** and **being beaten** by the day. (Tinubu)

The foregrounded words above are linguistic metaphorical utterances that underpin the cognitive metaphor POLITICS IS WAR. This means these linguistic metaphors which were uttered at various times by some Nigerian politicians during especially electioneering campaign periods are indicative of how Nigerian politicians conceptualise politics. The metaphors tell us how and what our politicians *think* about politics, especially elections. Mr Vice-Chancellor Sir, can you now see why our political processes are fraught with murder, assassinations,

arson and wanton destruction of property? The answer is simple! Politics to us is war; when we go to the polls, we actually do *think* that we are going for war – our opponents are our enemies whom we must *defeat* through every means possible, and when we have done that, what's next? We fall upon the spoils of war! The evidence of this sort of political behaviour is in the kind of metaphors we use to talk about politics. So, you see, Mr Vice-Chancellor, Sir, what we *think* about politics is revealed by what we *say* about politics, which by extension determines what we *do* when we indulge in politics. Our attitude towards politics will certainly be different if we conceptualise politics differently and consequently talk about it differently.

Discourse and Discourse Analysis

Discourse, a scholarly fashionable term in the recent years, means different things to various disciplines, ranging from verbal communication, talk/conversation, and a formal treatment of a subject in speech or writing to a unit of text used by linguists for the analysis of linguistic phenomena that range over more than one sentence (Mills 1997 p.1).

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Discourse relates to language in use for communication, whether spoken or written discourse. This implies that discourse captures any form of language use that constitutes a recognisable speech event: a joke, sermon, teaching, interview, counselling just to mention a few. Jørgensen and Philips (2002) succinctly aver that discourse is the general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life. Mr Vice-Chancellor, Sir, permit me to say in this inaugural discourse that everything is discourse and discourse is everywhere. Therefore, we can easily classify various discourses as: gender discourse, medical discourse, media discourse, spousal discourse, academic discourse, religious discourse, political discourse and so on.

Discourse analysis, on the other hand, can be logically described as a way of analysing connected speech and writing. It is not just an approach to study the language use in a particular situation but also looks at typical ways people use language in particular situations to do things. This field of

endeavour considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings. It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as the effect the use of language has upon social identities and relations. The foregoing accentuates to the title of this inaugural lecture, as a man thinks in his heart so he speaks to his world. More clearly, discourse analysis is a process in which the reader and listener's mind is working up on the linguistic features of the utterance to grasp the intended meaning of the writer or speaker in a speech event. It is as an umbrella-term for all issues that have been dealt with in the linguistic study of text and discourse. In the same vein, Eric (1986, p. 3) argues that discourse analysis "examines the way in which sentences are combined in larger linguistic units such as conversational exchanges or written texts" and usually involves the context which goes beyond the sentence level (Karasavvidis, 2000).Since context is fundamental to the analysis of discourse, it is pertinent to provide some theoretical grounding for its place in discourse.

Context: An Overview

Context is a multi-facetted and dynamic concept which is why it is being found in many disciplines, ranging from information technology, engineering and science, in the social sciences, and in arts and humanities. The dynamic nature of context reflects in the way it continually changes with its widest sense to enable mutual intelligibility among interactants in a communication process. It is very important as far as the investigation of meaning is concerned. Odebunmi (2006, p. 25) asserts that "context is the spine of meaning". This implies that the meaning of a word or an utterance is premised on the background/situation and environment that produced it. Spencer-Oatey and Zegarac (2002, p. 83) define context as a "set of assumptions that has a bearing on the production and the interpretation of the particular communicative acts". Broadly, context describes the circumstances that constitute the setting for an event, utterance or ideas and terms of which it can be intelligibly understood and appropriately interpreted. It covers everything that aids accurate interpretations of an utterance.

Context explains the situation in the language of use. Again, Odebunmi (2016, p. 12) defines context as the confluence of language and society. He goes further to say that context is the condition that constrains the determination of the proposition of an utterance or the understanding of an event or discourse. Context provides the background from which the meaning of a word or an utterance springs. It describes everything that surrounds the understanding of an utterance or a text. In fact, it is the missing link between discourse, communicative situation and society, which are parts of the foundation of pragmatics.

Furthermore, Ochs (1979, p. 23) states that context covers: "the social and physiological world in which the user operates at any given time [and], minimally language users' belief and assumptions about temporal, spatial and social settings; prior, ongoing and future actions, and the state of knowledge and attentiveness of those participating in the social interaction at hand". Leech (1983, p. 13) characterises context as "any background knowledge

assumed to be shared by the speaker (S) and Hearer (H), which contributes to the H's interpretation of what S means by a given utterance". This definition posits that for any utterance to be properly and mutually understood by both interactants, all the background paraphernalia that produced such utterance must be put into consideration. For instance, let us consider the utterance below as one of the expressions making rounds in the Nigerian media in 2018 and to date.

"Nigerian youths are lazy"

This statement was credited to President Buhari while responding to an interview question at the Commonwealth Business Forum in Westminster, United Kingdom on Wednesday, 18 April, 2018. According to him,"… about the economy, we have a very young population, our …more than 60 percent of the population is below 30, a lot of them haven't been to school and they are claiming that Nigeria is an oil producing country, therefore, they should sit and do nothing, and get housing, healthcare, free education." Apart from the fact that the President's

response to a question why he failed to sign the African Continental Free Trade Agreement in Rwanda earlier was clearly unrelated, his intention for deploying a defensive strategy is to discredit Nigerian youths and thereby boast that his government is working. This action if contextually considered, from the context of governance, reveals the leadership style of his government, that in most cases discredits or blames the previous governments for obvious failures and sufferings in the country, even after about three years in power. The statement afterwards generated heavy criticisms especially in the cyberspace; but interestingly, President Buhari's aides claimed that the president was quoted out of context. The above opinion corroborates van Dijk's (1977, p. 11) claims that context is whatever "we need to know about to properly understand the event, action or discourse".

Dimension and types of context

Scholars have highlighted many dimensions of context. With your kind permission, Mr Vice-Chancellor, I will reflect on a few of them which

could help to unearth meaning of thoughts and intentions. Hymes (1964) describes context as a tool that aids communication between participants. He identifies a number of features like participants, topic, setting, channel, code, message, form, key and purpose as elements of context. He captured the relationship between utterances and their context is systematised in his S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G grid, spelling out **s**etting, participants, ends, acts, key, instrumentalities, norms and genre (Hymes 1974). Halliday (1978) views context as comprising field, mode and tenor. Levinson (1983, p. 13) limits context to the basic parameters of the context of utterance which include participants' identity, role, location, assumptions about knowledge and so on. Mey (1999) gives a broader view of context as knowledge, situation, and co-text. Corroborating Mey is Cuttings (2002) who classifies context into situational, background knowledge and co-textual context. Meanwhile, Verschueren (1999:74) gives an all-inclusive view of the nature of context by claiming that the social world is examined by its social settings, institutions, cultural norms, and

values. As well, the physical properties of language users such as bodily postures, gestures, gaze, sex, physical appearance, and so on count a lot in interpreting one's utterance (context).

van Dijk (2008) provides a cognitive dimension to the concept of context, which he tags context models. According to him context model controls how participants produce and understand discourse. It enables participants to adapt discourse or its interpretations to the communicative situation as it is relevant to them at each moment of the interaction or communication. The model provides the crucial missing link in the cognitive theory of text processing between mental models, events talked about (reference) and the way discourse is actually formulated. Context conditions the appropriateness of discourse

Furthermore, from the presupposition approach, context is referred to as common ground or background information (Stalnaker, 1999). Here, context is seen as a set of propositions which participants take for granted in interactions. This

allows for two different conceptions of context: (i) a static conception in which context is external to the utterance, and (ii) an interactive one, in which context is imported into the utterance while at the same time involving and reconstructing context. The former has been discarded by pragmatics. From the foregoing, four categories of context are highlighted: linguistic, social, sociocultural and cognitive contexts.

Linguistic context relates to the co-text, that is, the lexical surrounding of a word or utterance. It explains what happens when the meaning of a linguistic item lies in the constraints imposed by the surrounding elements. (when the meaning of a text is constrained by its structural and lexical environment). Two levels are recognisable: syntagmatic relationships and referential relationships. Syntagmatic level relates to Firthian's view of collocation (Firth 1935), while referential relationships capture how lexical and syntactic choices determine meaning and stylistic motivations. In sum, linguistic context is the utterances before and

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after a word under consideration. As such, meaning is largely determined by the lexical items that surround the particular word that interests a linguist or user of a language and this is what the idea of co-text implicates.

Social context is an unmarked type of context. It is often considered to comprise the context of a communicative exchange and is defined by deducting linguistic context and cognitive context from a holistic conception of context. Constituents of social context are, for instance, participants, the immediate concrete, physical surroundings including time and location and the macro contextual institutional and non-institutional domains. Social context has been further differentiated by van Dijk (1981) with respect to general social context anchored to functional pragmatic coherence, and particular social context types anchored to contextual frames, assumed purposes and intentions.

In the field of corpus linguistics, Biber (1988) adapts basic social-context constituents to the examination of variation in spoken language and in

written language. According to him, the components of a speech situation do not only contain information about the present situation but also about previous encounters. This is reflected in his categories of participant roles and characteristics, which are further refined by the communicative roles of speaker, addressee and audience, their personal characteristics, the group characteristics, the relations among participants, the social role relations, the personal relations, the extent of shared knowledge, the setting, topic and purpose. Hanks (1996, p.235) demonstrates the importance of social context to communication thus: "Hence it is not that people must share a grammar, but that they must share, to a degree, ways of orienting themselves in a social context''

Sociocultural context is considered as a marked type of context in which particular variables, such as time or location are interpreted in a particular mode. Fetzer (2004) argues that "the distinction between monochromic time and polychromic time is based on the differentiation between a linear, tangible and

divisible conception of time, where events are scheduled one at a time and where this schedule takes precedence over interpersonal relationships". Arguably, sociocultural context accounts for all that determine the meaning that emerges in conversation that involves different participants who are not members of the same speech community. Fetzer further states that sociocultural meaning, by contrast, is calculated by mapping the cognitive context and linguistic context results onto:

1. the co-participants' communicative intentions,

2. other possible linguistic realisations of the communicative intentions, and

3. the contextual constraints and requirements of a particular sociocultural context.

This dimension of context traces talk and interaction to the values and beliefs of a culture or society. This means that the collective outlook and worldview of a people or a group within the society determine the range of lexical choices that the interactants in oral or written discourses reach for as demonstrated in the following excerpts:

I am pregnant; I can't go with you at this time of the day.

My mother should not talk when my father is talking.

Psychological/cognitive context is the mental host of inferences and reasoning. Fetzer (2004, p. 35) describes it as "mental representations, propositions, contextual assumptions and factual assumptions." It also refers to the location of an utterance or lexical item in the state of mind of a speaker or writer. Verbalised in this context may be the grief, doubt, joy, depression or excitement of the speaker or writer.

Context, Meaning and Intention: The Synergetic Paradigm

Context is a veritable tool for tracking meaning of utterances and intentions of language users. It determines both what one can say and what one cannot say. Context is sine-qua-non to both acts of expressing one's thoughts through the use of language and the process of deciphering the meaning of what is expressed. If we go medical, you would agree with me that it is possible to conclude about a

person's health from his urine; likewise through context intentions of language users can be determined. Mey (2001, p. 45) corroborates this as he argues that the decisive importance of context is that it allows us to use our linguistic resources to the utmost, without having to spell out all the tedious details every time we use a particular construction. Context, broadly speaking, has to be taken into consideration whenever we express our thoughts.

Thoughts are conceived from our mind and language is the tool with which our thoughts are expressed. It is therefore believed that the mouth speaks out of the abundance in the mind. It is therefore logical to have the knowledge of the spectrum of thoughts/intentions in the mind from the little that is said. Your language use is a reflection of your personality, identity and worldviews (Sapir-Worf, 1929; Bernstein, 1962). In sum, if expressions/utterances are critically contextualised using all the contextual paraphernalia intentions of speakers can be tracked. It is safe to say that context unravels intended meaning (thoughts) and

determines meanings (hearer's meaning, speaker's meaning, intended meaning)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, ladies and gentlemen, you all will agree with me that within the socio-political context of Nigeria, politicians are fond of deploying linguistic resources to manoeuvre and deceive the masses. Unfortunately, we allow ourselves to be deceived by them because we often fail to contextualise their utterances. Let us take a look at the following example:

Tinubu: Nigerians will feel safe under Buhari's government

(Channels Television, May 3, 2021)

Denotatively, the utterance implicates that Buhari's government is capable of securing the country or making Nigerians safe in the country. In this wise, the truth condition of the utterance would be obvious if it was uttered during electioneering campaign. But considering various contextual variables we will possibly arrive at a deep connotative meaning of the utterance. In the context of politics, for instance, the speaker, Tinubu, is a

politician and Nigerian politicians have the script of lies, deceit, giving false hope and vain promises. Nigerians can therefore suspect the intention of the speaker by using a future-marker modal auxiliary verb "will", after the sixth year of President Buhari in power. In this perspective it appears the speaker's intention is to re-convince Nigerians and clamour their continuous supports for the present administration in the event of serious insecurity challenges in the country. If this is so, it is also logical that the speaker is preparing the political stage for his presidential ambition. The latter seems to be the real intention behind the utterance because context describes the circumstances that constitute the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be intelligibly understood and appropriately interpreted.

Context is the optimal mapping between language and society. In this connection, Blommaert (2005) summarises Gumperz's idea of context as what accounts for the ways in which people 'make sense' in interactions. According to him, people pick

up quite a few 'unsaid' meanings in interaction. Those are the indexical meanings – the connections between language form and social and cultural patterns. People detect these indexical meanings because speakers provide verbal and non-verbal, behavioural 'cues' that suggest a fit between utterances and contextual spaces in which they become meaningful.

Mr Vice-Chancellor, Sir, for example, a Nigerian diplomat was recently assaulted in Indonesia. The Indonesian government in defending their action against him claimed that instead of showing his identity card Mr Ibrahim said "… just arrest me and you will regret to know who really I am". Situating the scenario in the context of display of pride in a foreign land, perhaps, Mr Ibrahim being too conscious of his personality, as the case with politicians in Nigeria, spoke out of the abundance of class consciousness in his heart which invariably put him in trouble.

All discourse analysis works share a focus on extended bodies of speech in its communicative

context. In short, discourse produced in one context inevitably connects to discourse produced in other contexts. As social actors or interlocutors interact, they imbibe their discourse with voices indicative of their social world, draw upon established genres to frame their discourse, engage with words that have come before them, and orient to anticipated responses.

Political Discourse

This section of my lecture offers an overview of the body of research known as political discourse. I begin by situating the relationship between politics and language within the linguistic and political turns of the 20th century. From thence, I offer a review of the different conceptions of text and talk that constitute political discourse and the tenets of the analytical framework known as Political Discourse Analysis (PDA). Adopting an inclusive conception of language, politics and discourse, I shall share some of the key findings of my research on political discourse on the local and international scene. Importantly, this section of my lecture explores some

of the relations between political discourse and political cognition. Although these concepts have started to receive scholarly attention in recent years, the connection between them is largely still being ignored. Most scholars interested in political discourse disregard the cognitive foundations of such discourse. Herein lies my interest and the crux of my lecture on how the machinations of the mind shape political realities in our world. Finally, I shall close the discussion with a review of some relevant studies of political discourse in terms of their theoretical and analytic frameworks and the socio-political issues they address.

The ideal point of departure for understanding the relationship between language and politics is recognising that politics cannot be conducted without language. For individuals who perceive the study of language to be restricted to the domains of linguistics and literature, Pelinka (2007) contends that ''language must be seen and analysed as a political phenomenon'' and that politics must be conceived and studied as a politically discursive

phenomenon (129). We can trace this recognition of the intricate relationship between language and politics to classical Greek and Roman treatises on rhetoric. In the classic era, political oratory played an important role in the affairs of the state. For example, during the rise of city-states in ancient Greece, Aristotle was vocal with his views on rhetoric as being central to citizenship (Aristotle 1954). Similarly, Cicero regarded rhetoric as a powerful political weapon for shaping the political belief and actions of the populace. Rhetoric was considered an enabler for citizens to live and engage in civilised communal life (Bizzell and Herzberg 1990).

Till date, the legacy of the classical rhetorical tradition manifests in the practice and research on political discourse within rhetorical, linguistic, communication and political studies. This legacy is sustained by political theorists, philosophers and rhetoricians who have published extensively on the language of politics (Black 1965). In the last three decades, political discourse has attracted considerable attention, particularly in critical

writings and from interdisciplinary perspectives (Kress and Hodge 1979; Fowler et al. 1979). These studies have placed emphasis on the media, particularly the reporting of political news in both the print and electronic media (van Dijk 1985, 1987; Geis 1987). Other forms of political discourse, are interviews, speeches and campaigns. These forms of discourse are instrumental in shaping political talks and opinions among the citizens and politicians.

Linguists have had a long history of analysing political discourse, one which dates to their interest in politics itself. The term *political discourse* can refer to a range of different text types. Broadly, van Dijk (1997), Fairclough (2001) have used it to refer to text and talk which is of a political production such as political speeches, debates, political interviews and policy documents. This definition focuses on the product and not necessarily the producers. Political linguistics was the first attempt to create an academic discipline for the research of political discourse (see Wodak and De Cillia, 2006). The analysis of political discourse is

concerned with understanding its nature and function, and with critiquing the role it plays in producing, maintaining, abusing, and resisting power in contemporary society. Such work, van Dijk (1997) insists, should be able to answer genuine and relevant political questions boggling the society from which the discourse is drawn.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, perhaps you could join me to ponder on what the use of language in political contexts tells us about the human mind. As I have already established in this lecture, there is a link between language, cognition and ideology. Therefore, analysing political discourse entails cognitive and linguistic frameworks that examine the linkages and the intricacies of thought, expression and action. Such frameworks are concerned with understanding the language practices embedded in political utterances to achieve legitimacy in political contexts. It is for this reason that I believe no speech can be produced or delivered in a vacuum, context plays a crucial role in the meaning making process of political discourse.

At this junction, I shall review some excerpts from the speeches of prominent Nigerian politicians. During the course of my academic journey I have used varied sets of discourse analytical frameworks to analyse the political speeches of Nigerian Presidents, Senators, Governors and even political aspirants. The excerpt below illustrates one of such studies. The excerpt was taken from President Goodluck Jonathan's post-election speech in April 2015.

> I thank you all for turning out en-masse for the March 28 general election. I urge those who may feel aggrieved to follow due process, based on our constitution and our electoral laws in seeking regress. As I have always affirmed, nobody's ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian. I congratulate all Nigerians for successfully going through the process of the March 28 general election with the commendable enthusiasm and commitment that was demonstrated nationwide. I have conveyed my personal best wishes to General Mohammed Buhari.

The excerpt foregrounds a keen sense of humility, unassertiveness and President Jonathan's peace-loving disposition. He frames himself as a

leader for whom national interest, safety and the rule of law are to be prioritised. Reminiscent of his mantra during the election campaign, he reminds all Nigerians that "… nobody's ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian". This message echoes his dissent for all forms of electoral violence and is a subtle reminder that though he had lost the election, no Nigerian should perpetrate violence in his name. The lexicalisations in this short excerpt are also suggestive of this position as shown in the choice of *due process, constitution, electoral laws and regress.* Lexicalisation in discourse is a paradigmatic process that entails the element of choice. The lexical choices in the speech depend on factors such as the audience, occasion, medium and so on. It is therefore up to the speaker to choose which term best expresses his/her intended meaning.

President Jonathan uses the first-person personal pronoun "I" to introduce interpersonal relations between the speaker and the audience. Personal pronouns are commonplace in political discourse as they allow the speaker to establish in-

group and out-group dichotomies within the discourse. Van Dijk (1997) has called this system of representation "the ideological square". It entails that the speaker emphasises "our" good qualities, and deemphasises "our" bad qualities. Conversely, when speaking about the out-group the speaker emphasises their bad qualities and deemphasises their good qualities. Examples of ideological squaring abound in Nigerian political discourse as illustrated in the excerpts below:

> I will not condone disrespect for the party. And when we expel the ministers, we will prevail on the president. He can't keep in his cabinet, people who have neither respect for his own decisions nor have respect for the party without which they would not have been ministers. I remain committed to those, however, by principle, on principles, I do not deal with political mercenaries. I will not miss my sleep because a lot of these guys cannot on a good day deliver their unit.

This excerpt is taken from a speech delivered by Adams Oshiomhole an All Progressive Congress (APC) chieftain. The binary opposition between the different individuals whom he speaks about can be seen from the first sentence of the excerpt. Oshiomhole (represented as I) functions in the sentence as Subject, Theme and Grammatical agent. Conversely, he obscures the agency of those that disrespect the party, thus giving room for anything/everything to constitute 'disrespect' for the party. In the entire excerpt, Oshiomhole is silent on who these individuals are or the actions they have carried out to disparage the party. Such framing in political discourse can be used to witch-hunt oppositional groups and stretch the reach of a politician's power. In the next sentence Oshiomhole introduces the pronoun "we" to indicate that the expulsion of the erring ministers will be carried out collectively. The framing is directly linked to the notion of party supremacy. The in-grouping and out-grouping is further illustrated in the representation of those who he remains committed to while the other individuals are not affiliated to him.

Another common feature in Nigerian political discourse is eulogising political figures and denigrating political opponents. One of the prime examples of this feature is found in Lai Mohammed speech below:

> Today, the President's efforts have paid off. Boko Haram has been massively degraded and it is gradually moving away from the front pages. The insurgents have lost their capacity to carry out the kind of spectacular attacks for which they became infamous. This did not happen by accident. It was the result of purposeful, credible and courageous leadership being provided by President Muhammadu Buhari, who started off by ordering the relocation of the command-and-control centre of the battle against insurgency from Abuja to Maiduguri, rallied regional and global support for Nigeria's efforts and boosted the morale and fighting capability of armed troops. Today, our gallant troops are on top of the insurgency and, in the words of

the Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Tukur Buratai, they are now engaged in mop-up operations.

The speech eulogises the influence and impact of the President's campaign against Boko Haram. Yet, five years after this speech, Boko Haram still thrives and has even metamorphosed into other splinter groups that perpetrate evil. Right from the opening sentence of the extract, Lai Mohammed makes it clear that the supposed victory is solely attributable to President Muhammadu Buhari's efforts. The speech relies on the resources in language to delimit the attribution of this victory to anyone other than the president. The lack of specificity allows Lai Mohammed to eulogise the President's *efforts, purposefulness, credibility, courage and leadership*. Interestingly, the narrative takes a different turn whenever Lai Mohammed or other APC stalwarts are probed about the failure of the Buhari administration to quash the insurgent group. They are quick to lay blame on the previous administration as the reason that Boko Haram continues to fester.

Name and Naming

I have argued in some of my scholarly engagements (Ibileye, 1994; Ibileye, 2007; Ibileye and Muhammed-Badar, 2014) that name and naming are ideologically oriented. This also agrees with some linguists' or scholars' submissions on the subject matter. We can find validation for this view in the pattern and nature of naming as they relate to insurgency and insecurity. In Nigeria, insecurity has had divergent coloration and manifestations. In the South East we have agitations by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB); in the South-South, the Niger Delta militants for resource control, in the South West, the agitators for restructuring (Oduduwa Separatist groups). Up North are the Boko Haram, who have been on a violent mission against western Education and all its manifestations including administrative and governmental structures. Still in the north are those called bandits who operate mainly in the forests of Zamfara, Kaduna and Katsina states through kidnappings, abductions and violent raids on communities. The modes of reference and naming of these disparate groups give a clue as to how those

who give the names conceive of the operations of the groups. While in official documents, IPOB has been outlawed as a terrorist organisation, the Boko Haram group has not. The elements in the forests of Zamfara, Kaduna and Katsina are simply called "bandits". The appellations "terrorist", "bandits", "agitators", "freedom fighters" in reference to these different groups have ideological import both for those doing the naming and those being named. The real world actions of government and its functionaries are dictated by how these elements have been named, and by implication, ideologically perceived. Please permit me to quote copiously from Abimbola Adelakun's brilliantly written article in The Punch newspaper of 22 July, 2021 titled "Bandits don't Shoot Down Airplanes"

Either the people they call bandits have morphed into something more monstrous, or Nigeria is not just winning its long-drawn battle against terrorism. Whichever one, this enemy needs a new name.

For Nigeria to still be referring to those who shot down a plane as

bandits, they should also tell us how state officials arrived at a calculation that makes the activities of IPOB and their leader, Nnamdi Kanu, to be called "terrorism." How did Garba Shehu, for instance, conclude that separationists like Sunday Igboho is a terrorist, but an official document still characterises those capable of downing a fighter jet as mere "bandits"? By what parameters does Nigeria define banditry and terrorism? Is there an official standard for qualifying these activities? Defining and designating an organisation as "terrorist" is typically at the discretion of state agents. In Nigeria's case, that value judgement has been so subjected to the nepotism of the government that the label does not do much more than categorise insurgent activities and agitation from a certain part of the country.

Compared to terrorists, "bandit" is a tame language because it suggests those perpetrating the crimes are a gang of outlaws operating outside the precincts of the state. Bandits do not typically attach any political aims to their activities since their exploiting the vulnerabilities of people who venture outside governed spaces is

mostly about money. The language of banditry also suggests they are not as much of a threat to national stability. Yes, in military lingo, "bandit" also means an enemy plane, but that rather remote definition has not been consistent with official and popular usage of the word in the Nigerian parlance.

Terrorism, on the other hand, means using violence to achieve political ends. Such violence must intentionally generate psychological ramifications, and it must set a chain of other political and social activities into motion. Thus, when Nigerian officials said that the likes of IPOB members and Sunday Igboho are terrorists, they insinuate there is substantial proof of political malice in their activities. It means anyone that associates with them or provides them any kind of support could be placed under surveillance and even punished. But what legal and moral mechanisms has accounted for their actions to be labelled as terrorism but which does not feature—and even more evidently—in the deeds of the ones who shot down a plane?

The multimedia representation of the groups too is instructive, as the images

evoked in the media about the respective groups go a long way to reinforce the authority's ideological inclination to the groups:

Source: Sahara Reporters September 5, 2019 (http://saharareporters.com/2019/09/05/katsina-bandits-speak-out-we-have-grouse-against-government-citizens)

Source: Vanguard, August 3, 2020 (https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/08/people-talk-on-amnesty-reintegration-of-repentant-boko-haram-members/)

Conclusion and Recommendations

The centrality of language to human communication is not in doubt. The endless possibilities of language to produce an infinite number of sentences from the finite set of formal rules of the language has also been established. However, it has been demonstrated that the true creativity and productivity of language resides more in its deployment in real pragmatic communication context, which is the true essence of the use of language, its use in face to face communication. Here, we have established that what the human mind conceives is generally what is communicated via language and our attempt to find meaning in communication must search beneath the surface of the structural elements with which utterances are conveyed to the contextual characteristics and features of such communications. It has been argued that language is not neutral but that it conveys the inherent ideological orientations of the speaker, or at least the speaker's hidden intention. Therefore, it is to these ideological issues that scholarship and general interest should be directed in order to reveal

the hidden communicative intentions of language users, especially, the political elite who might obfuscate and disguise their true political intentions in linguistic subterfuge.

Based on the arguments advanced in this lecture, one might contend that much of the failure of politicians could be adduced to the failure or insensitivity of the followership to pay sufficient attention to the language of the politicians, especially during electioneering. Sentimentalising politicians' speeches without scrutinising from a critical linguistic perspective will often lead to a superficial understanding of the real deceptive intentions of the political class. Therefore, the citizens should possess at least some knowledge of the workings of language as a powerful tool for deception. On the basis of the discussion in this lecture, the following are some of the recommendations I make for better communication, especially in governance and politics in Nigeria:

- It is recommended that critical linguistic inputs are made to major national policies

and discourses. In this respect, it is recommended that major institutes having to do with the design or implementation of national policy and agenda such as the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, the National War College, National Institute for Democratic Studies etc. have courses and inputs from Critical Linguists, Discourse Analysts and Pragmaticists.

- Unlike popularly believed, politicians may not actually make the promises they are credited to have made during their electioneering campaigns. Their actual intentions can be veiled by their linguistic deployments. The proper scrutiny of these obscured and obfuscating language practices can be laid bare by using critical discourse analysts and pragmaticists who can then properly guide the electorate in their respective choices. In this regard, media agencies, electronic and print should engage critical discourse analysts and pragmaticists more to interrogate and scrutinise the

campaign promises and manifestos of political parties and office seekers. This will ensure that the electorate are properly and qualitatively guided in their choices.

- The metaphors (especially of the conventional category) with which we talk about ideas and concepts are linguistic indicators of our ideological perceptions about such phenomena. This is especially so with regards to politics which has been conceptualised as war in the speeches of our politicians. Consequently, there is need for a linguistic reorientation that should engender deeper sensitivity towards the use of more society – developing and nation building metaphors by Nigerian politicians.

- There is need for more objectivity and decisiveness in government's effort and fight against insurgency, banditry and terrorism in Nigeria. The names given to the disparate groups involved in different forms of acts of lawlessness against the state and its citizens should be reviewed and properly objectified.

There is hardly any objective and rational justification for tagging some groups as "terrorists" and others who engage in more heinous crimes as "bandits" or even "kidnappers". Any group of persons who wage war against the people and wantonly destroy them and their livelihood, also wage war against the state and seek to destroy it. After all, it is the people that aggregate the state, not its physical space per se. Therefore, government and its agencies of anti-terrorism must be courageous and objective in naming such groups as terrorists so as to ensure that the full weight of the law is brought to bear evenly on the enemies of the state, irrespective of their ethnic and religious affiliations.

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