

Speech Idiosyncrasies in Political Communication Through the Framework of Sociolinguistics

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the concept of speech idiosyncrasies in political communication through the framework of sociolinguistics which sees language as a culturally transmitted behaviour patterns shared by a group of individuals. Data for this work are gotten from participant observation of the many campaign rallies of different political parties during the 2011 general elections in Akwa Ibom State. The study observes that linguistics is interested in political communication through sociolinguistics and has established the existence of language of politics as an isolative functional entity different from language of other professions. The study finds out that speech idiosyncrasy in political communication involves creative using of language through specific speech patterns on campaign rallies to mobilize the electorate for political action. The work discusses 10 speech templates noticed at campaign rallies and concludes that part of the cult-like following some politicians enjoy came through oratorical prowess in the use of any of the speech idiosyncrasies in political communication.
Keywords: Political communication, sociolinguistics, speech, idiosyncrasies, language.

INTRODUCTION

Linguistics is interested in political communication through sociolinguistics, and sociolinguistics is simply the relationship which exists between a language or languages and the culture and tradition as well as the politics of a particular community. The core interest of sociolinguistics in political communication is the language component of the totality of what constitute political communication, and political communication is a sub field of political science, sociology, linguistics and communication. At political campaigns, politicians try to outwit one another with persuasive speeches all aimed at convincing the electorate on the capability of the party and its candidates to better the lot of the voters. Speeches, some formal, some extempore, some impromptu are made, in any language of choice, the grammaticality and semanticity of the speeches notwithstanding. It is observed at political campaign rallies that some politicians evoke a god-like following and are wont to receive standing ovations whenever called upon to address the rally. Their choice of words and manner of speaking can best be described as idiosyncratic. For example, in the Akwa Ibom State political domain, Chief Ukata Akpan, a member of the State House of Assembly from Ini local government area, is an Ibibioman, but when call upon to make a political speech, will

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speak in a flawless Efik language and Efik language has always evoke love, care, tenderness and admiration in the minds of most Ibibios. There are many like him with speech idiosyncrasies. Therefore, idiosyncratic speech would be the kind of speech which contains some unusual or distinctive features that is used by the particular person who is speaking, which may or may not be found in the speech of most other people. Based on this premise therefore, this study takes a critical look at speech idiosyncrasies in political communication through the framework of sociolinguistics.

METHOD

Our methodology for this work was mainly participant observation. With Tape Recorders, we participated in the 2011 general elections in Akwa Ibom State. We attended many political campaign rallies of the governorship, senatorial, House of Representatives and House of Assembly candidates of many political parties in the State. We spoke with their campaign managers and members of the campaign committees and recorded their comments. Our next procedure was content analysis of works done on political communication, with emphasis on political campaign speeches in Nigeria, since we could not find materials in analyzing campaign speeches of politicians in Akwa Ibom State.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

There is a developed framework upon which linguists right from the 17th century have set about to do: it is in the description and explanation of the phenomenon known as language, and as Bell (1976) observes, a linguist must overtly or covertly assume an answer to the important question 'what is language?' Throughout the history of language studies in ancient Orient - China, and India, in classical Europe - Rome and Greece and in Medieval and Modern Europe, two opposing and discerning framework for language description has been posited and according to (Olaoye 1999), they are:

- i. Language is a system of signals conforming to the rules which constitute its grammar, that is, a pure code or communication system
- ii. Language is a set of culturally transmitted behaviour patterns shared by a group of individuals, that is, code as part of culture.

The first definition specifies the Linguists' goal of dissecting component parts of code and the description of the processes whereby appropriate sets of symbols may combine to create messages. Such an approach stresses the system per se and avoids considering the use of the system by human beings, leaving this to the social and behavioural sciences. From the second framework above, sociolinguistics emerged, and it is an attempt to integrate linguistics with social functions. Sociolinguistics is an expanding field of interdisciplinary activity, focusing in a variety of ways on the interaction of linguistics and social phenomena. This work is based on the second theoretical framework.

Political Campaigns

Campaign simply defined, is planned activities intended to achieve certain aims. It is a programme of activities which, when carefully carried out, lead to the achievement of

foreseen objectives. According to Phillips, Roberts and Benjamin (1999), electioneering or political campaign is a formal or legal effort to obtain elective office. It is the contest that occurs between rival candidates, prior to an election, as they seek popular support. Political campaigns are basically speech events, and the essence of speech making is to communicate the party's manifestoes to the electorate. For effective communication to take place, there must be what Qubein (2006) calls the five keys of communication, which are:

- (i) **Desire:** The desire to communicate is in all political aspirants. In fact, political campaigns are all what politicians yearn for as it offers them the opportunity to explain what they have for the electorate.
- (ii) **The Process:** The process of communication involves the successful production, transmission and reception of a message via the verbal medium. As an aspect of different but interrelated factors which have to be manipulated by both the sender and the receiver, these factors are functions of the physical/mental characteristics of the environment in which the act of communication takes place, the participants' knowledge of the language being used for communication and the participants' ability to use this knowledge. The overall efficiency of communication depends on the participants skills in manipulating these factors.
- (iii) **Mastering the basic skills:** The purpose of communication is to convey ideas, not to show off vocabularies and grammatical expertise. It is to know the 3 basic skills in communication which are: connecting with the people, conveying messages that people can understand and checking their responses.
- (iv) **Practice:** Effective communication is a learned behaviour. The techniques of communication have to become part of your daily activity.
- (v) **Patience:** Nobody becomes a polished, professional communicator on first try. It takes patience.

For effective communication to take place, and for the electorate to understand the politicians, the five principles of communication here must be present. However, it is noticed that apart from desire, politicians do not possess the other four elements of communication. At a campaign rally, a politician will have the desire (that is what he went there for in the first place), but will lack the knowledge of basic process, skills, practice and patience to deliver his speech to the understanding of the electorate. Moreover, according to Stahl (2012), in making a great and distinct political campaign speech, there must be the presence of what she calls "the 5 keys to a great political speech" which are;

- i. Understand the audience and target your words appropriately.
- ii. Build the speech around a big idea.
- iii. Balance emotion and fact.
- iv. Be original (make it your own).
- v. Exploit contrasts.

Of the 5 keys, the last two (make it your own and exploit contrasts), clearly depict the concept of speech idiosyncrasies in political communication. For a political campaign speech to be considered great, you must make it your own and exploit the contrasts in other people's speeches for your speech to be considered great, memorable and idiosyncratic.

Speech Idiosyncrasies

These are simply a person's particular way of thinking, behaving and speaking; most especially speaking that is clearly different from that of others. In this work, speech idiosyncrasies are simply the creative abilities of politicians to include drama, panache and candour in their speech delivery, and to ultimately make them stand out in their oratorical prowess. Let us now enunciate on the 10 templates of speech idiosyncrasies we saw at the 2011 general elections in Akwa Ibom State.

Word Formation (coinages)

The use of word formation (coinages) falls under what Edo (2013) calls "theatre in political communication". It is simply the creative use of language to facilitate effective communication in political campaign speeches. Word coinage is the process of formation and the addition of new words in the lexicon of a language without necessarily going through the process of affixation. New words may also enter the lexicon in other ways, like clipping, abbreviation, reduplication, acronym, compounding, blending etc while some are created outright for a particular purpose, as it is often the case at political campaign rallies. A politician who creates and uses them at campaign rallies will stand out. Examples of word coinages are: stomach infrastructure, Etangekak, Ndia, Heaven eyetimere, Digital governor and many others.

Eulogy

Eulogy was used in high doses at all the campaign rallies in Akwa Ibom State. It is defined as "a speech or piece of writing containing high praises of a person or thing". The most visible form of eulogy at campaign rallies was during introduction of personalities and candidates for the different elections. A candidate may be introduced with as many as 4 prefixes before his name. Titles like Chief (or High Chief), Obonganwan, Rt. Hon. Dr. Elder Chief Barrister, among others are reeled out before the appearance of the candidate on the podium to speak. His achievements, no matter how minute, will be magnified as a national glory worthy of emulation. A good orator can eulogize a nonentity to high heavens for the mere fact that he wants to sell his candidate to the electorate. At campaigns, a politician can be introduced as:

Otuekong Ibibio
Akang nkang (sword) of Ati Anaang,
Ada Idaha ke Efik Eburutu,
Akparawa 1 of Uyo
Ubokudom Ikot Ekpene etc.

The use of eulogy by some politicians in polishing the reputation of other politicians makes them stand out in their speech delivery.

Proverbs

One of the most important genres of African folklore, proverb, is a device which enables a speaker to present a speech in a more concise and picturesque manner than ordinary expressions. Ashipu (1999) says "...for a poet or indeed, for the speaker who is some

sort of an artist in the use of words, the proverb is a model of compressed or forceful language. In addition to drawing on it for its words of wisdom, he takes interest in its verbal techniques . . . its selection of words, its use of comparison as a method of statement”. Proverbs are sayings condensing the wisdom of experience, adage, and maxim. They are forms of literary expression of the people as they make observations about the practical experience of life. Proverbs in general are used to advise, warn, teach, admonish, mock or intimidate. They constitute an important ingredient of language use within the socio-cultural framework. The language of proverbs is usually short, unreserved and emphasizing hard facts or home truth. The vocabulary is nourishing, colourful and vivid, and the use of figurative expressions is common. The proverb therefore, is a rhetorical device in public speaking which functions as ‘soothing balm’ in the intellect of the audience.

Ashipu (1999) defines proverb as “a short figurative expression or sentence currently in use in commending, or reproving the person or thing to which it is applied, and often containing some moral precept or rule for our conduct for life”. In the domain of public communication, especially at campaign rallies attended by all and sundry, it is taken as a mark of wisdom and familiarity with the traditional lore, if the politician spices his speech with elaborate use of proverbs to drive home his point. At the governorship campaigns of National Republican Convention (NRC) in 1992, the campaign manager at the Comprehensive Secondary School, Ukpom said thus “*ukemeke ndidoro ke enyong eto nto ata ye ofum*” (you cannot stay on top of a tree and bet the wind to throw you down). The import of this proverb was not lost on the electorate.

The government in power in the State was NRC, but supporters of SDP, the opposition party, even on that campaign ground, were betting to remove the NRC government from power. The meaning here is that it is almost impossible to remove a sitting governor from power. The government in power had promised the electorate more dividends of democracy in its second term, and this was brought to the notice of Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau at a presidential campaign rally in Benin City on March 14, 2011 and he quotes an Hausa proverb thus: “if somebody wants to give you a jacket, first take a look at the one he is wearing”.

At a gubernatorial campaign in Akwa Ibom State on March 2011, at the Uyo stadium, Governor Godswill Akpabio said that “*owo idongo eti etok ayen utom no akasop usung*” (a good child sent on an errand does not get lost). He went on to add “we sent Udoedehe to Abuja as a Minister, but he went to fight his senior minister, the staff of his ministry and any person on sight. He got lost. We have to remove him”. The most popular political adage in Akwa Ibom State is “*Abasi amemek mme adia mkpo isong*” (God has chosen those to enjoy the fruit of the land). In the 1992 governorship election in Akwa Ibom State between the SDP and NRC, the SDP posed a serious threat to the NRC and when the late Obong Akpan Isemin was confronted with this fact, he said that “*ese kpakpad eka Ekpo*”, meaning (you don’t intimidate the big masquerade out of the square, you plead with him to leave). Akwa Ibom State is a society that has a lot of respect to proverbs and the use of it in communication. Those in good command of it stand out anytime in campaign rallies.

Idioms

Idioms are phrasal constructions or verbal expressions closely associated with a given language. Africans, especially Nigerians, enjoy the use of idioms in every day speech. Consider the following example: “The problems of Niger Delta go beyond the issue of derivation fund, the issue is that the people made the mistake of *putting their eggs in one basket*. They have been in the same party for eight years”. (Sokoto State governor and presidential candidate of the Democratic Peoples Party DPP, Attahiru Bafarawa, urging the people of the Niger Delta to reject the PDP in the General Elections) (Weekly Spectator, March 18, 2003, pg 24).

Fromkin and Rodman (1988) observe that knowing a language includes knowing the morphemes, simple words, compound words, and their meanings. In addition, it means knowing fixed phrases, consisting of more than one word, with meanings that cannot be inferred from the meanings of the individual words. The usual semantic rules for combining meanings do not apply. Such expressions are called idioms”. Idioms are therefore phrases or sentences whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as whole unit. The use of idioms at political campaigns is mainly done by locals, and this is to show total grasp of the language. Idioms and proverbs usually have very little difference, as in when a political godfather tells the electorate at a campaign, “PDP ima win, iya idia nkpo”. It does not mean that the people have not been ‘eating,’ the idiomatic expression simply means “when the PDP wins, our condition (situation) will improve considerably”. At a campaign rally at Uyo by the ACN, a speaker spoke thus “we are warning the PDP, don’t use your bread and pack our stew”, meaning don’t use your incumbency (power) to steal our resources. Users of idioms at campaign rallies will always stand out, because even when idiomatic expressions are found in general conversations, applying it to suit the discuss at a campaign demands creativity in language usage.

Religious/Political Interplay

Politicians, especially in Nigeria, have recourse to citing references from the Holy Bible to compel the electorate to vote for them and their political parties. The reason is to give spiritual credence and authority to their speech. They believe that majority of Nigerians are very religious. An example of biblical citation can be seen in the reply given by Chief Ojo Maduekwe (the then Peoples Democratic Party National Secretary) when he was asked to comment on the decamping of the founding members of his party. He drew analogies from the Holy Scriptures as seen in the following extract:

“If you want me to be modest, I will tell you that we have left Egypt, but we have not yet reached Canaan. We are still between Egypt and Canaan. We are in the wilderness. That wilderness is a much better place to be than Egypt, especially when you have a Moses with you and that Moses, of course, is President Olusegun Obasanjo. We have a Joshua in the wing. That Joshua seems to be Yar’ Adua” (Daily Champion, Monday 12, 2007).

The language of political campaigns in Akwa Ibom State of course also contains the language

of the priestly order. It is a well known fact that Akwa Ibom State is a very religious society, and this has reflected in the choice of languages at political rallies in the State. No time was this demonstrated the more than on April 12, 2011 when the presidential candidate of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu visited Uyo for the presidential/governorship campaigns at the Uyo stadium (remember they entered the stadium by breaking all the keys used in locking the stadium). First to speak was the Chairman of the Campaign Committee of the governorship candidate of the ACN, Dr. Bob Ekarika, with his satirical elegance, in the mould of the prophets of old, and ringing a bell in hand, said thus:

Holy ghost—(chorus) fire

Anybody who does not want us to campaign here, holy ghost—(chorus) fire

Any spirit sent by the thieving government in power to disrupt this campaign, holy ghost—(chorus) fire

All the powers of the official kidnappers in Akwa Ibom State, holy ghost — (chorus) fire

It was more of a Christian crusade than a political campaign. He whipped the emotion of the crowd into frenzy. He continued “whoever does not want God’s anointed governor of Akwa Ibom State to rule, holy ghost—(chorus) fire. He went ahead to introduce a Christian song, “send down your power; we pray thee O Lord; send down your holy ghost; we pray, Amen”. Next to speak was a pastor who prayed thus “anybody who will not vote for the ACN, may God seize their brains”. The use of religious register at political campaigns was more of deliberately inciting supporters of one party against the other, and openly suggesting that God will support one candidate over and above the other.

At the Asan Ibibio, in Ekom Iman on April 11, 2010, during the Ibibio formal declaration of support for Godswill Akpabio for a second term, the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Akwa Ibom State chapter, prayed thus “since what is done on earth is what is done in heaven, may heaven confirm what we have done here today in Jesus name”. This prayer seems a distortion of what is in the Holy books. At many political campaigns, there were also the issues of deliberately distorting, misquoting or mistranslation of many Bible portions to convince the electorate of their knowledge of the Holy writ. The Bible portion (Roman 13:1) which says “there is no authority but as established by God” was distorted to read “God has already established PDP as the government in Akwa Ibom State, and so shall it be at the elections”. Another Bible portion misquoted was 1 Corinthians 4:20, which says “for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power”. It was misquoted thus “for the kingdom of God is not in ACN, but in power..., power to the people—PDP”. Another portion was 1 Corinthians 7:20 which says “let every man abide in the same calling where he was called”. This was translated by the PDP thus “if you were called to be a bus conductor, if your father was called to be a bus conductor, why do you leave that to come and contest for the governorship position of the State?” (in apparent reference to Senator Udoedehe of A C N whose father operated a transport company in Uyo). The Bible portion that says “as for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord” was translated thus: “as for me and my family, we shall vote PDP”. Another portion was “by their fruits, ye shall know them”. By sending thugs to burn down government

property at the State secretariat, you have now known what they will do when in government”. Gospel songs at campaigns were also distorted to support the party at the campaign rally.

The gospel song
Winner oh oh oh , winner
Jesus you don win
Was replaced with:
Winner oh oh oh, winner
Godswill you don win

Another song: “*Jesus amanam oboho, owo inamma nkpo ikan oro*” was replaced with: Godswill *amanam oboho, owo inamma nkpo ikan oro!*

At the 2003 governorship elections in Akwa Ibom State between Dr. Ime Umana of ANPP and Obong Victor Attah of PDP, Dr. Ime Umana’s campaign train was passing through the State secretariat at Uyo when curious civil servants went out to cheer them on. Ime Umana came out and starts his campaigns right there and then, and said thus: “I know you are not well paid. An ANPP government in Akwa Ibom State will increase your salaries”. The civil servants responded with a distortion of a popular gospel song thus “*nkpo akanam mi mfehe ndiyom fi oh, Ime Umana*” instead of “*nkpo akanam mi mfehe ndiyom fo oh, andiwam*”. The governorship campaign director for the ACN said at a rally in Oron, that “Akpanudoedehe is too much for the PDP to contend with. This April election is bad market for them. It is easier for the camel to pass through the eye of the needle than for Godswill to get a second term.” Users of Christian epistles in political campaigns will always stand out in their campaign speech delivery.

Fallacies

A fallacy is usually an improper argumentation in reasoning resulting in a misconception or presumption. Literally, a fallacy is “an error in reasoning that renders an argument logically invalid”. By accident or design, fallacies may exploit emotional triggers in the listener or participant (appeal to emotion), or take advantage of social relationships between people (e.g. argument from authority, head of the party or a stalwart). Fallacious arguments are often structured using rhetorical patterns that obscure any logical argument. The major concern of a politician on a podium is to convince the audience of his party’s or candidate’s genuine intentions to the electorate when in power, and is ready to appeal to base emotions with fallacious arguments to plead his course, and his choice of words must show that he is in command of the language and its varied usages.

A favorite fallacy among politicians is the “false generalization”, an abstraction of the argument that shifts discussion to platitudes where the facts of the matter are lost. For example, no politician leaves the podium without exclaiming “my party will deliver democratic dividends”. The complex issue of development is generalized and oversimplified under the word ‘dividend’. Another abstraction is “we will fight corruption” which can mean whatever the politician has in mind since there are many forms of corruption. The PDP’s campaign slogan “*Akwa Ibom ado ok*” is a classic case of the fallacy of false generalization. This is a mere platitude.

Sycophancy

The dictionary meaning of a sycophant is “a person who tries to gain people’s favour by insincere praise or always agreeing with them”. The art of sycophancy at political campaigns is such that it has the ability to becloud the politicians from reality. Sycophancy was elevated to an art in the 2011 governorship campaigns in Akwa Ibom State. There were so many organizations and groups formed just to sing the praises of the government of the day. At a campaign rally at the Uyo stadium, a commentator of the Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation said that “I have counted 1018 organizations with banners so far and more are still coming into the stadium”. And all in support of the governor’s second term bid. A frontline lady politician, when invited to speak at the campaign, said that: “when I was a child, I used to hear ‘come and see America wonder’. Today, it is ‘come and see Akwa Ibom wonder’, ‘come and see Akpabio wonder’.

Pidgin

Pidgins have been defined as “deviant forms of standard languages whose structure, vocabulary and syntax have been reduced” (Fawehinmi, 1987). It is viewed as a marginal language which arises out of contact for specific purpose(s) such as trading and missionary work. To some people, pidgin is a contact vernacular which is normally not the native language of any of its speakers. It is a reduced form of a source or base language, arising out of contact between people with very different first languages. Therefore, there must be a language and cultural contact for a pidgin to emerge, and Fawehinmi (1987), quoting Whinnon (1968) believes that “the languages which we today recognize as pidgins are not spoken by foreigners nor even primarily by dominant speakers of standard language, but by natives in subordinate position who do not share a common language among themselves”. More specifically, according to Mafeni (1977), “it has been argued that the Nigerian pidgin is essentially a process of urbanization, whose origin lies in the contacts between Europeans and Nigerians on the coast, while the subsequent development and spread is the result of contacts between Nigerians”.. After the early contacts between Europeans and Nigerians at the coast, some Nigerians were constrained to develop a means of communication which could bring them closer to the white man. Such Nigerians were then employed to serve the European missionaries and traders as cooks, stewards, gardeners, interpreters and teachers (Fawehinmi, 1987).

As already observed, the National Universities Commission (NUC) classifies Akwa Ibom State as “educationally advantaged State”, meaning that the literacy level in the State is either average or above average. This might be why most of the politicians used Nigerian English to address the electorate at campaigns. All the eight governorship candidates (Akpabio, Udoedehe, Larry, Ibanga, Inwang, Enwang, Dr Ekanem, Umoh) in the April 2011 elections in Akwa Ibom State were graduates. None of them spoke in pidgin when they were making their formal State campaigns at Uyo stadium (opened to Akpabio and to Udoedehe (through violent entry only) and at Saint Patrick Primary School, Abak Road, Uyo where others declared. Their campaign managers did not use pidgin too. But other speakers, especially women speakers and those targeting women, freely used it at

the rallies. The most popular pidgin cliché at the rally was

Iban e-dey? e- dey

Iban e-see e-see

Iban e-fine e-fine

Any complain? (chorus) no complain

Another pidgin slogan was:

When you vote finish

No go away

Stay and protect your vote

No allow them tief your vote

And yet another was:

We defited dem in 1999

We defited dem in 2003

We defited dem for 2007

Why we no go defit dem again dis time

(chorus) we go defit dem

Another set of people that used pidgin at campaign rallies effectively, although for its humorous value, were the Comedians. They are essentially hired hands by political parties to provide entertainment for the electorate. They are able to mimic the tone and pronunciation of English words by Ibibio speakers to bring out the absurdities in our general use of English language in Akwa Ibom State. The use of pidgin in political campaigns in Akwa Ibom State was more of a comic relief in most of the campaigns, and it was also for those whose mother tongue are different from the Language of the Immediate Community (LIC) and their grasp of the English language is hopelessly low, but fortunately or unfortunately, they have been chosen to speak for the party at the campaigns.

Fawehinmi (1987) says that pidgins can develop only in language contact situations and as such, their ultimate forms are always influenced to some extent by the various languages in contact. This means that the type of pidgin used in Eket senatorial district might be different from that used in Ikot Ekpene senatorial district, because of the different languages spoken in the two senatorial districts. Nigerian pidgin is a cluster of dialects, and within a single community of pidgin speakers, there is a wide range of pronunciation differences between the speech of younger educated people on the one hand, and that of the illiterate younger generation and the older generation, especially when used in open communication as in a rally.

Bilingualism

The learning of one language is a universal trait of human behaviour whereas the mastery of two or more languages is a special skill. Olaoye (1999) defines bilingualism as the ability to speak two languages which are spoken with equal competence for all purposes in the life of the bilinguals. A bilingual is therefore someone who can communicate very well in more than one language, say Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Ibibio or English. Such a person might be able to express his thoughts and feelings intelligibly in the languages, and can alternate them

freely when situation requires it. However, a bilingual may not necessarily need to possess equal or symmetrical competence in all the four language skills:-listening, writing, reading and speaking. He may have an extensive repertoire (store) of vocabulary but may not possess a perfect control of the grammar of the second language. Bilingualism is therefore the demonstrated ability to engage in prolonged discussion concerning activities of daily life in more than one language. Fatokun (2000) quotes Adeniran (1987) as saying that occasion or environment is capable of producing different types of bilingualism which can be broadly classified into 4 main types, namely:

- (i) ***Coordinate versus compound bilinguals:*** Coordinate-compound bilingualism results from learning two languages in one and the same environment. In the bilingual, the system of the languages are fused or collapsed with the result that the bilingual tends to identify corresponding items of the two languages with the same referent (meaning)
- (ii) ***Oral versus literate bilinguals:*** Oral bilingualism deals with a situation where the bilingual speaks his two languages but has no literary skill in one or both languages, whereas a literate bilingual does not only speak both languages but also reads and writes in the two languages
- (iii) ***Elitist versus mass bilingual:*** Elitist bilingualism manifests a policy of selecting a few for special training in a foreign language. These bilinguals are specially trained for a purpose, and are always deployed to where their skills and experience are needed. Mass bilingualism, on the other hand, is a kind of programme designed for the entire populace for its own sake, and also for the advantages that the society and the individual may derive from it.
- (iv) ***Genuine versus pseudo bilinguals:*** However, it is the genuine versus pseudo bilinguals that is relevant to this work. These types of bilingualism are said to be based on performance. The genuine bilingual has sufficient facilities which on demand bring about adequacy and fluency as well as automaticity in his performance in his 2 languages. The pseudo bilingual, on the other hand, has a limited knowledge and fluency in his second language. He cannot use his second language (L2) efficiently in communication. This type of bilingualism is true of thousands of Nigerians who perceive English as the language of the elite, identify themselves with the language as a language that is honoured and respected and therefore struggle to use it, no matter how poor their level of competence (Fatokun, 2000).

Besides, there are many Nigerians in this group of bilinguals who, in their attempt to reach a wider audience, need to speak English. Bilinguals of this nature in English are the market men and women, some health workers in our various local and State health centres and hospitals, Christian evangelizers and even teachers in public primary and secondary schools and our politicians at the local, state and at the national level. At times when these people lack the needed English words or expression to bring home their points, they opt for relevant words and expressions in their mother-tongues. In other words, they code mix and code switch and may sometime employ pidgin English. Most Akwa Ibom politicians especially those seeking elective positions are bilinguals, and this is not surprising. The

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Section 106, sub section (c) says “a person shall be qualified for election as a member of the House of Assembly if he has been educated up to at least the school certificate level or its equivalent”. Since the language of education in Akwa Ibom State is English language, it can be safely said that politicians seeking elective offices are bilinguals, in English and their mother tongue, and they can use any or both as situation demands during campaigns.

Code Switching

Code switching, a common feature of bilingualism, frequently occurs in bilingual communities where 2 languages are not distinctively assigned social functions. Besides, code-switching is typical of an individual speaker’s speech behaviour. It can be deduced from here that code-switching is possible in a situation where the speaker has more than a language in his linguistic repertoire and that involves shifting from one language to another within the same discourse. Bentahila and Davies (1983) define code-switching as “the bilingual’s ability to choose one or the other of his 2 languages in a particular speech situation”. It should be stated here that code-switching is different from switching from one variation of one language to another (that is, switching from Ibibio Ikono to Ibibio Ikot Abasi). This is stylistic switching. Code-switching is basically a feature of bilingualism and not stylistic switching within the same language. It can be clearly stated that code-switching flourishes in the language behaviour of an average Akwa Ibom politician.

Bilingualism, therefore, explicates the linguistic behaviour of many Akwa Ibom politicians, a behaviour which can be seen to differ from one campaign venue to another, depending upon varying conditions. Code-switching could be from English to an indigenous language or vice versa. However, the rate at which a bilingual code-switches depends on his type or stage of bilingualism as well as his social status and role in a given situation. Many politicians in Akwa Ibom code-switch for 2 major reasons: to show their level of competence in English language and for emphasis. For example, at a campaign in Eket by an opposition political party, this statement was recorded “the amount of money coming through monthly allocation to the State is enough to turn the State into a mini London. What is happening is that a clique has cornered the State’s resources. *Mbo, okuk siduk Akwa Ibom afit offiong ado sikipida ediong idung ami yak ayaiya*”.

Code mixing

In many bi- and multilingual communities, one often comes across a type of language interaction in which two or more languages in the speaker’s repertoire interact to produce a new ‘mixed code’ characterized by distinctive formal properties and fulfilling specific functional roles. This is what is known as code mixing. According to Olaoye (1998), code mixing is “the use of one or more languages for consistent transfer into another, and by such a language mixture, developing a new restricted or not so restricted code of linguistic interaction”. From this definition, it is evident that code-mixing reflects a situation where a speaker employs 2 languages alternately in one utterance. This is often manifested at the lexical level, that is, in the words used. It is worth noting that the elements that are mixed

are not particularly culture-bound as they are for the most part ordinary day-to-day items that are acceptable equivalents of the other language in use. Besides, the mixed elements obey the rules of their original language with respect to their internal grammatical organization, while they obey the rules of the absorbing language with respect to their external grammatical organisation. Code-mixing takes place rapidly, frequently and almost unconsciously, with a single social event, within a single text and in fact, several times within a single sentence. Olaoye (1999) observes that “mixing involves the deliberate mixing of 2 languages without an associated topic change. It is primarily used as a solitary marker. It is not something brought about by laziness or ignorance as such, rather, it requires the conversant to have a good knowledge of the grammar of the 2 languages, and to be well aware of societal norms. Mixing is a source of pride to bilinguals”. For example “the type of money coming into Akwa Ibom State every month *ado* that *ekpedeme eno afit ndufo, ndufo ekabba millionaires*”

Threats

For some reasons, the language of threats at political campaigns, unlike in the past, was not a popular phenomenon. During the 3rd republic, we use to hear from the ruling party then, the NPN, phrases like “whether you vote for us or not, we will still win”. The language of political campaigns in Akwa Ibom State between 2007 and 2011 did not contain open threats to the electorates, but was a regular feature in intra-party and inter-party activities. Threats, where noticeable, were veiled, as in “we will urge you to vote for our party to benefit from our good programmes, because you cannot reap where you did not sow”. Party faithfuls, who were dissatisfied with the imposition of a particular candidate and therefore threatened to work against party interest, were threatened with expulsion. The Nation Newspaper of March 25 reported that “... a lot of sentiments and intimidations were brought into play by the president. We actually saw a different side of the president. It was apparent that any governor who chose to be defiant after persuasion would be daring the might of the presidency. The cost of drawing a battle line with the presidency will be too much for any governor to bear. So, it was a kind of duress which was too hot to resist”. However, threat as a speech idiosyncrasy manifested openly when the chairman of the PDP chairmen at a rally at Ikot Ekpene Stadium said: “we will not allow anybody to come and campaign in Anaangland for the position of a governor. Should anybody tries, he is digging his own grave”. Those who dared paid dearly for it.

Translation

Translation is an operation performed on languages; a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. Cartford (1978) defines translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (source language) by equivalent textual material in another (target language)”. This replacement entails the replacement of source language (SL) phonology/graphology by the target language (TL) phonology/graphology equivalents. Translation here involves the replacement of a source language phonology with that of a target language phonology. The source language here might be English, while the target

language might be an indigenous language or the language of the immediate community (LIC). Dosert's (1955) definition of translation is closer to our idea of translation as canvassed in this work. He says translation is "that branch of applied science of language which is specifically concerned with the problem—or the fact—of the transference of meaning from one set of patterned symbols, into another set of patterned symbols". Translation (commonly called interpretation) at political rallies was not very popular among politicians in Akwa Ibom State. Apart from 2 occasions at Oron and Ibeno during the campaigns of a senatorial aspirant of ACN, translation was rarely observed at other campaign venues. And this is not surprising, since most of the time, the candidates spoke using the language of the immediate community (LIC). The use of the LIC helps overcome the problem of bogus translation. For example, at a rally at Ibeno, we were told; "let's vote for ACN, let's get it right this time" and was translated thus; "yak isin nwed ino udom, nti nkpo obono k'ubok udom"

CONCLUSION

This work has helped to establish the reality of the existence of language of political campaigns as an isolative functional sociolinguistic entity that entails the utilization of language to carry out political activities or functions. Therefore, the language of political campaigns is a language variant used in the political domain of social network, consisting of identifiable patterns of language use. This means that the language of political campaigns is different from the language of the clergy or even the language of literary discourse. The study has also observed that the different speech templates in political communication enable politicians have a choice of different speech patterns to attend unique status in campaign speech and to draw large and appreciative following to the party, candidates and to themselves.

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