

**IMPOLITENESS AND POWER RELATIONS OF THE CENTRE IN EDO STATE 2016
GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION DEBATE**

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Abstract

Language has power potentials to influence make or mar individuals and shape public opinions on the norms of life. This ascertains the relationship between language and politics as inseparable because language is an indispensable tool in politics. In this light, recently, studies on political discourse such as election debates have tended to be a description and analysis of style, innovative and persuasive strategies of politicians and manipulation of linguistic structures to champion individual interests in the discourse. There is a need to investigate how texts instantiate and sustain power relations by the politicians in election debates. This study therefore examines how power relation strategies are used during Edo State 2016 gubernatorial election debate under the theoretical framework of impoliteness by Brown and Levinson (1987). The analysis focuses on impoliteness linguistic structures to examine the utterances of politicians who are the centre and their pragmatic import in the debate. The analysis reveals that politicians used face attacks, accusation, condemnations, rudeness, aggression and so on in the debate to make their political ideologies known to the public and also undermine one another. This study can also illuminate and elicit further studies in this area of political discourse.

Keywords: Power, impoliteness, election debates, centre margin.

Introduction:

Language has been continuously used since antiquity by human beings for all types of social functions in order to designate concepts, inform and express ideas. Language which is a veritable tool to human actualizes its meaning in context and situations. It is thus a valuable source for realizing the goals of interaction, if we know how to use it in order to exercise the full extent of our agency so as to obtain our goals. This ascertains the relationship between language and politics as inseparable. Language has potential to make or mar individuals and shape public opinions on the issues of life.

Lakoff, (1990, p.7) emphasizes the importance of understanding language in order to accomplish specific goals. The analysis of language, she stressed “Is more than an academic exercise. Today, more than ever, it is a survival skill. ... Language is politics, politics assigns power, and power governs how people talk and how they are understood.” She further argued that power and politeness are closely connected to one another. Locher (2004) elaborated on the existence of such a link when she explained that “an exercise of power is most likely to co-occur with an exercise of politeness, where the later redresses the former”.

Power seems to have a close relationship with politeness, given its treatment in political discourse (in literature). In Brown and Levinson (1989, p.77) Power is seen as an asymmetric social dimension of relative power, roughly in Weber's sense. That is the degree to which it can impose his own plans and self-evaluation (face) at the expense of it S's plan and self-evaluation. Power is the sense of the ability to control someone else. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.74) State that:

We are interested in D(istance), P(ower), and R(anking) of imposition) only to the extent that actors think it is mutual knowledge between them that these variables have some particular values. Thus these are not intended as sociologists' ratings of actual power, distance, etc but only as actors' assumptions of such ratings, assumed to be mutually assumed at least within certain limits.

Brown and Levinson have given values on a variable that provides input to a formula for calculating the weightiness of face-threatening act. This study which is impoliteness and power relations in Edo State 2016 election debate has supported Brown and Levinson's predictions for the power variable: the more the relative power of the speaker, the more politeness they tend to receive.

There is a fundamental connection between impoliteness and power. Impoliteness involves communicative behavior intending to cause the "face loss" of a target or perceived by the target to be so. And face loss in the context of impoliteness involves a "conflict and clash of interests" a target wants to claim for themselves or freedom of association" (Culpeper, 2007 p.24). Locher explains further that "committing serious FTAs is thus a powerful linguistic strategy to exercise power in order to engage an opponent in interaction (Locher 2004, p.201). Power and disagreement are connected through conflict and clash of interest". This means that for impoliteness to occur in an on-going interaction there must be conflict as clash of interest. The connection between power and impoliteness is that the exercise of power is conceived in impoliteness which is elicited by clash of interest and conflict. Beebe (1995) in Culpeper (2007, p.26) argues that rudeness to get power has the following purposes.

- 1) To appear superior, includes "insults and put downs"
- 2) To get power over actions (to get someone else to do something or avoid doing something yourself) includes "Sarcasm" and pushy politeness" used to get people to do something, as well as attempts to get people to "go away or leave used alone or finish their business more quickly".
- 3) To get power in conversation (i.e to do conversations/management to make the interlocutor talk, stop talking, shape what they tell you, or to get the floor) includes saying "shush" and rude interruptions.

The above relates to Brown and Levinson's negative impoliteness which means power application is closely related to negative impoliteness.

In election debate which is a competitive encounter power is exerted by the politicians through impoliteness because there is a clash of interest. The politicians try to undermine one another through impolite linguistic structures. The aim of the contestants is to win electorate's votes at the polls. So the fate of the polls has a strong connection to their ability to persuade the electorate and win their votes. "And the ability of the electorate to respond appropriately to the intents of the candidates is the result of the effective use of language that they employ" (Bamgbose 2020, p.428) in election debates and other political campaign situations.

The politicians possessing the social role of the ruler(the electorates the ruled) have the power to recast major representations of socio-political issues in the nation. Language empowers them to have a strong hold on the minds of their listeners'. In this light, Onuigbo (2019, P. 42) asserts that:

Power is usually associated with those who serve, as the uncritical mouth piece of the masses who are more dead than alive. These spokesmen are the power lords who are in charge of the mechanism for administrative control and surveillance as well as the system of commercial and material exchange.

This shows that they are the center of economic dominance. Among the politicians there is power tussle to continually possess the economic political and social power of the nation. In election debates these

powerful rulers-politicians showcase their political rhetorical prowess as the combat with one another through words to make their political claims known to the public.

This study investigates the language use of the ‘power lords’ using impoliteness as an adversarial strategy in Edo State 2016 gubernatorial election debate. This debate occurred on Saturday 10th of September, 2016. Candidates of four political parties participated in the debate organized by channels television in collaboration with a civil society organization, enough is enough Nigeria also tagged Edo decides?

The candidates include Mr. Osaro Onaiwu of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) Pastor Amos. Areolobge of the labour party (LP) Mr Godwin Obaseki of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and Pastor Osagie ize-Iyamu of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP).

Objectives

The study seeks to:

- Identify power relation strategies in the election debate
- Outline linguistic structures of impoliteness in the debate.
- Describe the linguistic features of impoliteness and their pragmatic functions in the debate.

Conceptual Clarifications

Pragmatics views language use from language users’ intentions and perspective in consonance with context. When an interlocutor says something to an interlocutor’s partner, the interlocutor intends that the discourse partner be affected in some ways. Pragmatics concerns both the relationships between context of use and sentence meaning and the relationships among sentence meaning, context of use and speakers’ meaning (Fasold and Cannon-Linton 2012, p.157).

Locher and Graham (2010, p.8) define pragmatics as “the study of the ways in which social actors use language to shape and form relationships”. Interpersonal pragmatics encompasses relational, attitudinal/emotive and evaluative aspects of embodied language use. The primary area of concern in interpersonal pragmatics is naturally interpersonal relations which include “mutual social connections amongst people that are mediated by interaction, including power, intimacy, roles, rights and obligations” (Culpeper and Haugh 2014). There is a concern for interpersonal evaluations, which involves “appraisals or assessment of persons, or our relationships with those persons, which influence the way we think and feel and consequently sometimes what we do” (Kadar and Haugh 2013). This explains that interpersonal pragmatics is often interlinked in situated interactions. This means for example while face and impoliteness can be conceptually distinguished as being primarily instances of relations and evaluative work respectively, in practice the analysis of face and impoliteness is often necessarily entertained.

Politeness or impoliteness is issues that are realized in communication especially through the medium of language. Language is a unique attribute of humans, which is used as a chief medium of communication, for building interpersonal relationships, exchange of ideas and passing of information utterances in conversations and the manner of presenting them in specific situations are important to politeness pragmatics because utterances and their presentations may make or mar a promising interaction depending on how speakers employ politeness principles during the conversation and how addressee respond to such politeness tokens. This is because politeness is a social construct; various aspects of context have a great influence on the language in conversations. For instance, power-distance relationship between speaker and hearer, societal expectations and norms, mutual expectations between speaker and hearer have bearings on politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987) maintain that politeness helps interactants to minimize the imposition caused by a face-threatening act. Lakoff (1975) believes that politeness functions to reduce differences of opinion which may lead to arguments and conflicts in interactions.

Generally speaking, while this study believes that polite utterances normally reduce misunderstandings in conversations as they enhance conversational interactions and cement social togetherness, it does not however subscribe to the notion that impolite utterances inherently lead to a disruption and breakdown of conversational encounters. This work assumes that impoliteness may lead to a breakdown of conversations only if the specific contextual variables, taken together, support such impolite utterances. It assumes further that there are instances where impoliteness may be treated as conversational

strategies by the addressees such that it will not lead to disruption or breakdown of conversations. It is this line of thought that has prompted this research into impoliteness and its power relations among election debate candidates.

Election debate is a structured social process in which politicians seeking elective posts are made to face the public and present their manifestoes. The scenario is a question and answer sessions and contestants use the structure to contend with one another. Akinwotu (2015, p.36) affirms that “it is common in this type of encounter for contestants to exhibit verbal behaviour such as confrontations, criticisms, condemnations, accusations, rudeness and aggression etc which may constitute threat to the face of another contestants”. Yet the above behavioural acts do not breakdown the ongoing debate. This is because election debate is conceived in impoliteness.

On the other hand, politicians engage in impoliteness during debate encounter to exercise power over themselves and the public. Locher (2004) claims that mainly power cannot be divorced from social practice; it entails a discursive struggle between interlocutors, who negotiate it in their exchanges with one another, and most importantly it comes into being through communication”.

Review of Related Literature

Election debate it scholarly works on election debates have therefore emerged. Akinwotu (2015) studies on vision for sustainable Development: Pragmatic strategies of media political competitive of participants. His study aims at accounting for discourse engagements of participants. He obtained his data from the 2012 Ondo State gubernatorial election debate with these specific contestants Olusegun Mimiko of Labour Party (LP) Olusola Oke of People’s Democratic Party (PDP) Rotimi Akeredolu of Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). He examines the discursive and strategies of the debate under the theoretical framework of Brown and Levinson’s politeness and face work, watt’s relational work and frame theory. His analysis reveals that the data is characterized by politically-driven issues which include governance, economic and social development all situated in political and media events. Two types of verbal behavior namely polite and impolite verbal behavior which are projected by three context-driven politeness strategies namely persuasive, offensive and defensive politeness strategies marked contestants’ utterances. While persuasive politeness strategy, which is exemplified by promising and testimonial argument, projects polite verbal behavior; offensive and defensive politeness strategies employed by contestants to categories and construct one another as inept, unfit, incompetent project impolite verbal behavior.

Nanan and Badroeni (2018), study on politeness perspectives in governor election debate program of West Java Province Indonesia (the second session on Mei 14 2018). The public communication of candidates presenting their minds indicates the different perspective of politeness theory as negative or positive strategies. Election debate consists of presenting arguments, opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, interrupting, clarifying and questioning sessions. Politeness in this study has different practice and understanding in political view.

The researchers use qualitative research by means of classifying the statements of candidates in every session. The study reveals that political practice; speech, action and response has specific tendency. Positive face is indicated by statement compared with the real action of the candidates have done before as the public functionaries and negative face appears when candidates state the theoretical perspective only without experience based on explanations. Every activity in political case presents the implicit purpose to get good perception in public view. Politeness in election debate actually means a bridge to make clear about vision mission in accordance with the fact and reality the society appreciates.

Bamgbose (2020) studies on a pragmatic analysis of the 2015 Oyo State (Nigeria) Gubernatorial Debates under the theoretical framework of relational work by Locher and Watts (2005). The debate featured four governorship candidates: Abiola Ajimobi of All Progressive Congress (APC), Teslim Folarin of People’s Democratic Party (PDP), Rasheedi Ladoja of Accord Party (AP) and Seyi Makinde of Social Democratic Party (SDP). Political debates are largely informed by political information which are at the disposal of the interviewees. These jointly conceived opinions are expressed as politic, polite and impolite discursive strategies are seen to characterize the utterances of the different participants in the debate, ranging from the panelists, to the debaters and a guest presenter who handled a special segment of the debate. The

relational work strategies of politeness reveal the ideological stances of the candidates in the debate and also help make generalizations as to the trend that political election debate follows.

Isotalus (2011) studies Finnish presidential debate from the perspective of functional theory with a view to critically evaluating the applicability of functional theory to the analysis of Finnish political campaign. The study is comparative between the American political communication culture and the Finnish political communication culture to show the different system designs. The findings show that candidates used attacks more frequently than acclaims and defence frequently than attacks as opposed to the theory prediction that candidates will use acclaims more frequently than attacks and use attacks more frequently than defences. He observes that the fifth axiom of the theory based on division between “policy” comments will exceed the number of character topics. Isotalus observes that the result is different from the theory prediction that general goals will be used more often to acclaim them to attack and that candidates’ defence was more in response to the moderator’s questions than to the opponents.

Beneoit, Stein, and Hansan (2004) investigate the relationship between the contents of presidential debates (1980-2000) and newspaper coverage of these debates with the sole aim of ascertaining whether voters can rely on newspaper report in providing an accurate picture of the important campaign messages. The data is analysed using the functional theory to investigate the accuracy of attacks on acclaims and defences that are reported in papers when compared to the utterances in the debates.

Findings reveal that from 1980 to 2000 newspaper coverage of presidential debates, using contents analysis, that people who depend on newspaper coverage do not get “accurate picture of the contents of the debates”. This is because the stories consistently and significantly “over-represent attacks while under-reporting acclaims; thereby, projecting the presidential debates more negative than themselves”. Also observed is that the reports could reveal a tendency for newspaper accounts to discuss policy less and character more than occurred in the debates themselves. From the result it is obvious that different media may report debates differently and that the newspaper clearly project policy over personality. They finally reveal that the coverage relatively report little content of the debates and filtrate their own version.

The studies reviewed have looked at political debates from different perspectives and with different aim. None of these studies have investigated Power Relations and Impoliteness in Edo State Gubernatorial Election Debate which is what the present study sets out to do. This study focuses on those interventions in which politicians principally address one another since they best exemplify the combative dimensions of these encounters. It is in these interchanges that debaters intend to damage and dominate the opponent thus showing the antagonism that underlies and shapes their relationship.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on Brown and Levinson’s work on politeness principles according to Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness refers to verbal and non verbal behaviour that enables individuals to maintain face. Politeness which is observable in situations of social distance or closeness, is the means by which we show awareness of another person’s face, face being technically defined as “the public self-image of a person; face according to them is an individual’s feeling of self worth or self-image which can be damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others. Face kinds; include respect, or differential operation in a situation of social distance, example superior versus subordinate and friendliness/solidarity which occurs in social closeness.

Brown and Levinson’s explain that face, which can either be positive or negative, may be saved, met or threatened in a number of ways. The positive face represents the individual’s desire for acceptance, approval, respect and appreciation of others, while the negative face is the individual’s desire for independence to act without imposition by others. These desire (positive and negative faces) may thus be satisfied (saved) or denied (threatened/via illocutionary acts which may orient to one face need or the other at different times and on different occasions. Interlocutors however regulate the damage made to face through strategic choices guided by an assessment of the size of the FTA on the basis of parameters of power (P) Distance (D) Rating (R) of imposition.

In a nutshell, Brown and Levinson’s approach to politeness is the approach of face management which is made up of three concepts face, face threatening act (FTA) and politeness strategies. They

distinguish between positive politeness (solidarity politeness and negative politeness (deference politeness) where the former relies on the interactant's need for association and the later, on his need for disassociation.

The meaning of face as conceived here is very similar to an individual's desire for pride, integrity, dignity or self-esteem. We can infer that face is primarily a psycho-social, emotional and non-linguistic feeling of self that an individual carries into any conversation with the expectation that co-interactants should recognize it. However, since face resides in the communication between interactants, the manifestations, treatments and management of face is primarily linguistics.

This study focuses on impoliteness as a second order concept (Watts 2003). Impoliteness is conceptualized here as a speaker's intentional communications of face aggravation or attack to the hearer, who perceives and/or constructs the speaker's behaviour as intentionally face aggravating or attacking (Culpeper 2005). In a context like political election debates, where politicians compete for a determinate political office and consciously attempt to damage and dominate the counter candidate as a result, it would be appropriate to conceive impoliteness towards the rival as aggravation or attack against the candidates' persona. Additionally some notion of face is suitable in political election debate since politicians' image and its attribution by the public is crucial for them to achieve their political goals. It is Brown and Levinson's notion of face that is adopted in the study. Thus, a speaker's intended impoliteness in the debate has been viewed here as strategies to damage the positive face of value of the hearer.

Methodology

(a) Data Collection:

The data for the study comprised the Edo State 2016 Gubernatorial Election Debate organized in September 10th, 2016 by Nigerian Election Debate group (NEDG). The debate was oral/spoken and televised in channels T.V. the researchers transcribed it from You Tube Internet Services for convenience of analysis.

(b) Method of Data Analysis

In analyzing the data twelve excerpts (12) from the data showing power relations and impoliteness strategies will be identified. The researchers use descriptive method of analysis which identifies linguistic features of utterances, their context of use and their pragmatic functions. The analysis is based on the objectives of the study.

Data Presentation/Analysis

Power equation plays a role in all social interaction being always "discursively negotiated and ... latently present in every instantiation of social practice" (Locher and Watts, 2005, p. 86) as well as linked to the evaluation of impoliteness. Therefore, there is an interface between impoliteness and power in the context of political election debate as a social practice. To this end the researchers focus hitherto on those interventions in which politicians principally address one another and exemplify the combative dimensions of their encounters. Power is prominent in election debates due to the candidates' conflicting goals, and that it is achieved through impoliteness that participants intend to exert power over the rival.

In election debates impoliteness occurs when the contestants feel that the issues raised may affect their carriers or ambitions badly. In order to defend their roles or protect their interests they engage in unmitigated threats, tallying with a large part of face work without redress. In Edo State Gubernatorial election debate 2016, candidates skewed power relations through impoliteness as seen in

Excerpt 1: ... PDP. Yes I can be trusted. I have held offices before. And I'm proud to say, I have never been indicted, I have never been tried. The EFCC matter you are talking about was an initiation. I cleared my name and I am here. If truly I was involved you know yourself that I would have had to refund that money or I would be taken to court. With due respect to the person who is making the ... the APC candidate had a problem, rather than clear himself, he went to court to restrain them. I went to EFCC, I didn't go to court to restrain them ... (Pastor Osagie (Ize-Iyamu the PDP candidate).

Excerpts 1 and 2 are purely accusation on the APC candidate. The aim of the statement is to convey dislike for Mr. Godwin Obaseki the APC candidate and his party. The affirmations also show disagreement with APC actions, values and opinions. Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu exercises power over Mr. Godwin Obaseki

and his party as one possessing the power of financial integrity more than him and his party. His real aim is to demean and devalue the incumbent opposition party.

Excerpt2: APC: It is not corrupt, infact, it's really funny that pastor who served under Igbinedion administration whose principal was convicted is talking about corruption. The issue is that under the PDP administration where they controlled the EFCC and they controlled the security apparatus in Nigeria as a part of political victimization. They kept inviting commissioners and staff of this administration. They could not find one deictic for any conviction.

The exercise of power here is latent with face constitution/aggravation strategy as a form of impoliteness by the APC candidate Mr. Godwin Obaseki to instantiate the position of his party as a corruption free party who displays transparency in all facets of the government unlike the PDP. He also uses excerpt 1 to answer the question in excerpt 3 which for interactional purposes uses situational factors of the conviction of Governor Igbinedion to direct his answers in the manner that suits him as a politician. This shows that election debate is actually a situation where politician resort to use language as a safe way to immobilize opposition and mobilize support. It is a face damaging strategy.

Excerpt 3: I will give Mr. Obaseki another moment you did not answer fully the question about corruption in the government you are serving it says about 70 times you said that some members of the present government have been invited by the EFCC. Is the government you worked for corrupt? (Moderator).

This is a question from the moderator which is a pessimistic utterance which may weaken the hope of the audience on the candidate involved. It is a form of impoliteness as the question connotes that the APC government is not corruption free.

In election debates power relations are sometimes lopsided in favour of the panelists who enjoys the luxury of framing questions to his own advantage through varying communicative strategies like being ambiguous to targets, causing them to misunderstand and, therefore give the appearance of guilt, blocking, interrupting, over lapping with speech and changing topic before the addressee has got the chance to answer (Shuy 2006: p. 34). This strategy is what the panelist adopted here to exert power on the APC candidate Mr. Godwin Obaseki through an impoliteness strategy of face attack.

Excerpt 4 APGA: This one is for Pastor Ize-Iyamu. I want you to tell me the moral justification for you to contest this election. After serving lucky Igbinedion for eight years and being part of Oshimole for six years. So tell me the moral justification. (Mr. Onaiwu APGA candidate).

The above excerpt is a contemptuous utterance as an impoliteness strategy by the APGA candidate Mr. Onaiwu which is a distinctive tactics to hurt his rival Pastor Ize-Iyamu the PDP candidate. The speaker tends to disassociate his opponent from the group which is a characteristic of election debates where politicians' deployment of formal and impersonal address terms to claim relational distance between themselves and the opponent. This is why Mr. Onaiwu the APGA candidate hides under the forum of election debate to exert power on his opponent through impoliteness strategy of attack.

Excerpt 5 APC: well you see, ee mm in politics you must separate fact from fiction. I do not understand what the claims being made by Mr. Ize-Iyamu is. I think it is hog-wash and it is really nonsensical because in the matter he talked about, I was not even invited by the EFCC... (APC candidate, Mr. Godwin Obaseki).

Power through impoliteness is consolidated in the above statement in the debate. The above statement conveys dislike for and disagreement with Pastor Ize-Iyau the PDP candidate. Mr. Godwin Obaseki's aim is to diminish the importance, the values, actions and opinions of Pastor Ize-Iyamu. Mr. Obaseki the APC candidate uses self-face damage as a strategic and purposeful tool to attack the PDP candidate. The power exerted here is interactional persuasive power as in political communication in general. The answer from the APC candidate is a negative face aggravating move in order to increase his imposition weight as the candidate for the incumbent party to drag the opposition party aside as clueless to the happenings in the government. (moderator)

Extract 6: ... let me go straight to PDP's candidate. You served for eight years in the government of the PDP where many people in the state believe left the state in a state of disrepair. Why do you think now that voters should trust you this time around? (Moderator).

The above is a question directed to the PDP candidate Pastor Ize-Iyamu. This is a face attack which refers to rights, duties and rules not respected. The moderator exerts power on the debate candidate through negative face attack and presents a challenge to the PDP candidate and his party. The above question shows that the PDP is no good to govern Edo State again since their government damaged the state which another party should come and repair. The moderator controls much of the interaction, thereby putting numerous constraints on the debater's interactional dynamics. The question above portrays his power as the moderator the controller of the debate to demean the PDP party and his action is normal in an election debate.

Impoliteness strategy of rudeness is conceived in the election debate to deflate the political ego of the adversary in the encounter. This is instantiated in the excerpts below

Excerpt 7: PDP unfortunately, this government has shown no interest in investment and the have no economic direction. So a lot of industries in our state have shut and unfortunately too no attempt has been made to bring in new ones. The assets of Edo line littered all over the country is more than their liability... because of lack of economic direction it has been left like that. The workers are not paid and the place is shut.

Excerpt 8: PDP... I know that Edo State government fought vigorously to ensure that local governments did not gain autonomy. And if you are not owing workers, why did you collect 12.5 billion naira funds and for what? So I am amused when you say it's none of your business. By law, Edo State government is supposed to give 10% of their IGR to local governments why have they not done so?

The PDP candidate pasto Ize-Iyamu said was rude to the present administration in order to demean the APC candidate in the debate. Culpeper (2007, p.20) describes rudeness "as words or behaviour that are likely to embarrass or offend people". It is sometimes unintentionally but if it is conceived to be acted it becomes impoliteness which is what is used here as a strategy of impoliteness. The PDP candidate tries to show that he is an all powerful candidate over the other candidate specifically the APC candidate because he can manage the assets of the state appropriately and can pay Edo workers salaries as at when due which will earn him trust from the electorates.

Impoliteness in election debates also come inform of condemnation. This is seen in this excerpt.

Excerpt 9: APC: All I have done in my life is creating jobs. Working with investors can attract investments... Government's responsibility is to create the enabling environment and the government that is not accountable, that is not corrupt like the past government cannot attract high quality investments.

Excerpt 10 PDP: The present government as you can see have excelled in wealth consumption but have failed woefully in wealth creation.

In election debates candidates use condemnation as an act of impoliteness to exercise power on the opponents to boost their own political acumen and tell the electorates that they are the best for them. In excerpt 9 the APC candidate Mr. Godwin Obaseki condemns the past government PDP as corrupt as a result did not attract any high quality investments to the state by his own standard. On the other hand the PDP candidate pastor Ize-Iyamu affirms that the present government can only consume wealth but cannot create wealth for Edo people to benefit from excerpt 10. His utterance is purely condemnation without any linguistic mitigation.

Excerpt 11: PDP: Well Mr. Godwin Obaseki (laughter from the audience) your company Afrinvest facilitated the thirty billion naira water storm funding of the capital market and the two hundred and twenty five million dollars from World Bank. Can you tell us how much as commission did your company take?

Excerpt 12: PDP: I can give you some journals done by this government and you will be shocked. So really if you look at this sartorially, this government has been a disaster. In the industrial sector they have failed, in agriculture, they have failed, in housing they have failed. They are not transparent and the level of corruption is mind buckling.

In excerpt 12, Pastor Ize-Iyamu was very aggressive as he uses parallel structures as repetition to draw attention and emphasize that the present government has not made any positive impact in the state.

The analysis identifies the power relation strategies their pragmatic import influencing impoliteness work in interpersonal relationship and in the election debate. In relation to the functioning of power, Oha (1994, P. 110) avers that to understand how power functions as a constraint in discourse, we need to consider the differences between the social roles of speakers and their audiences, and the implications of such social

roles for discourse roles”. The social roles that exist among the contestants in election debate are that of power tussle. Election debates give politicians opportunity to exercise power among them in order to showcase their political prowess to the public.

Conclusion

From the precedings, the study reveals that what transpires between the candidates in election debate is that of power tussle conceived in impoliteness. The linguistic strategies identified are condemnation, accusation, aggression, rudeness and confrontations inform of face attacks. These strategies prevalent in the study showed how the politicians exert power among themselves to make their political claims known to the public. The study also proves that the language of the rulers that is the centre is skillfully mechanized with antagonism in order to prove their political prowess to the public. Election debate is conflictive in nature as a result candidates use different adversarial linguistic nuances to out-wit one another in the game of politics. Their common aim is to win the votes of the electorate at the polls. On the other hand impoliteness plays the role of assurance of votes of the electorate since the performance of the candidates during the debate may determine their success at the polls. It is also established that impoliteness is an important strategy of attack in election debate. Electoral debates are non-cooperative debates. Therefore, the participants do not try to convince their opponents about the suitability of their proposals but to manifest dialectic superiority over their opponents as a metaphor of their political superiority and governing capability.

Recommendations:

This study has opened up insights into the study and perception of power relations and impoliteness of the center in election debate. The researchers therefore, recommend further researches to be carried out on other forms of political discourse. Two election debates can be compared and the Power relations and impoliteness strategies can be investigated in literary texts.

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