



HATE SPEECH: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE OF ISSUES THROUGH THE HOROSCOPE OF COSMOLOGY

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Abstract

This paper examines the concept of hate speech through the horoscope of cosmology in the Nigerian context. Deducing meaning from utterances is a two-way affair, resulting into either the positive or the negative, depending on who is the utterer and who the listener is and at what informed the utterance versus context of speech. Pragma-Sociolinguistics is considered an appropriate theoretical framework with particular recourse to context of situation. Two (2) purposively selected speeches of individuals in power were focused alongside the reactions generated, with related newspapers headlines as well as twenty-four(24) screenshot face book texts in relation to hike in cement price. The affordances of the texts become metaphoric for their structural deficiencies. The paper discovers that not all hate speeches are pragmatically hate-imbued, and that not all 'sweet talks' are made in the best interest of the target audience. This buttresses the witty belief of the Yoruba as a people that 'when two siblings of same mother engage in discourse that engenders bitterness, it is purported to be eventually beneficial to the two parties. The study has implication for dramatic ironies in the sense that an individual cannot offer more than he possesses, suggesting laxity not only in governance but also in education as demonstrated by grammatical errors in the comments of face book writers on issues of public interest. All these call for urgent remedy. The paper concludes on a note that supposedly hate-speeches should be taken as toe holders' opinion meant for a better nation, and by extension a well-developed sub-Saharan Africa, just like the errors corrected to enhance the standardization of the written English of face book writers.

Keywords: *hate speech, pragma-sociolinguistics, mis-governance, grammatical infelicities, implicature*

Introduction

Times come in life when we find ourselves in circumstances of great fear, times of serious challenges and potent threats like that of the experienced COVID-19 pandemic, such situations bring uncommon confusion even to brave men of ideas, the rulers as well as the ruled. We must not allow fear to define our lives and operations however. Cowards, they say, die many times before their death. If you are so afraid to die, you will never truly live. Fear is forward-looking, but entirely in the negative sense. Fear swallows faith, it torments and draws psychosomatic evils to the fearful (1 Jn.4:18) In reality, most times, fear is a thoughtless response to perceived dangers, and it is an undue worry about evils that may never be. Fear and unbelief is faith in reverse-gear, acting like a satanic magnet, attracting bad things to the fearful. Each time one is disposed to thinking negatively, the best thing is to nullify the thought emotionally by putting faith in the creator

Fear comes by hearing negative words, which do open opportunities for evil intentions: through strong determination, sensitivity to the voice of divine directions and articulate prayers, serious fear gives way to uncommon blessings. Hate speech, as far as Nigeria is concerned has become a trendy issue, given the rate of infrastructural deficit, alleged nepotism on the part of the ruling class, ethnic labeling and attachment to incessant security threats, banditry and kidnapping amidst the dwindling economy with no end in sight to the brunt the masses continue to bear. This unpalatable scenario reached such a crescendo to the extent that secession was being moved by different ethnic groups that made up the entity called Nigeria.

That scenario is linked with deterioration that has surfaced in nearly all facets of Nigerian polity. Educationally, its relevance is increasingly being questioned today by stakeholders (Oduma, 2010). In 2014, the National Universities Commission reported that there were 36 Federal universities, 36 State Universities and 42 Private Universities. In 2017, the Buhari administration approved another seventeen universities making the total number of Nigerian universities to be 121. According to World Bank (2007), the implication of

increase in the number of universities is that university graduates will increase, therefore making the number of unemployed to be saturated apart from the fact that quality of graduates becomes worrisome (Ayodele (2001), Kolawole and Olatunji (2007), Jeyifo (2011), Momoh (2013), and Odebunmi (2020) to mention but a few with respect to the decline in the quality of English in Nigeria. Insecurity is just the opposite of what we have as security, i.e. the existence of danger, hazard, uncertainty; lack of trust. Insecurity is the state of being subjected in every respect to terror, threat, risk, molestation, bullying and harassment (Achumba et al. 2013, Adebajoko and Uguoke, 2014, cited in Alao and Akoji, 2021). Factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria include menace of unemployment and poverty, elite exploitation of ethnicity and religious differences, corruption, weak security apparatus, porous border, marginalization and inequalities in the country, bad governance and poor leadership, disconnect between the people and government, loss of socio-cultural and communal value system, rural/urban drift, high rate illiteracy, interagency rivalry among others.

Nigeria dailies as well as the social media are awash with reports of altercations from one person or organisation to another, each raising an allegation on issues of public interest. In respect of the drama being enacted in the public space through the media, the paper examines the reason behind raising an allegation in the first instance, whether proved right or not in the final analysis, which the party accused termed as “hate speech”. The recent ban on Twitter operation in Nigeria has been suspected to be an attempt by government to gag the press – a violation of press freedom entrenched in the constitution. This occurred when almost on daily basis the media would be full of information of failure of government in terms of insecurity and increase in the rate of poverty. An instance is the issue of Reverend Nbaka, a critic of govt policies leading to his alleged ban and subsequent reaction from the Presidency:

Mbaka attacking Buhari because president turned down his request for contracts – Presidency

(<https://bit.ly/3nEXmD> (01 May 2021))

With reference to the Yoruba cosmological perspective, for instance, not all hate speeches have negative connotations or implications. It is even held that when two siblings engage in serious discussion or conversation, the level of the seriousness of the matter is readable from their stern look. The root cause of

what is currently referred to as hate speech could be attributed to what can be termed the ‘polar stand’ between the people in power and the masses. By polar we mean divergent views on issues like that of a proponent and his opponent in a debate; while one says ,’yes’ the other would always maintain a ‘no’. The radical change in reasoning by people in power was given credence going by Professor Pat Utomi and his colleagues’ postulation.

Prof. Utomi was one of seven professors who facilitated a leadership training in the University of Georgia for local government chairmen from a State in the Southwestern Nigeria. In the course of the lecture, he adverted to a January 13, 2018 column he wrote about how power literally damages the brains of people who wield it and causes them to be dissociated from reality. To a few of the chairmen at the training, their response was “We reject it in Jesus’ name.” But it did not take long before it dawned on the few that, part of the problem Nigeria has is ‘religion’. The more Prof. Utomi expounded on the psychology of power, the less resistant they became (Beveridge, 2003).

There is nobody who will not wonder why people in power change radically; why they become so utterly disconnected from reality that they suddenly become completely unrecognizable to people who knew them before they got to power. One can easily attest to the accuracy of the age-long truism that, ‘A friend in power is a lost friend.’ Of course, there are exceptions.

Abraham Lincoln once said, “Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.” The moment such people relinquish power, you’ll discover that they are suddenly normal again. They share our views, opinions, pains, make noises, condemn abuse of power and identify with popular causes. The question is, “What is it about power that changes people?” The probable clue has been found in psychology. Dacher Keltner, a psychology Professor at University of California who did extensive study on the brains of people in power found that people under the influence of power are neurologically similar to people who suffer traumatic brain injury. They are “more impulsive, less risk-aware, and, crucially, less adept at seeing things from other people’s point of view.” In other words, their capacity for empathy is lost. This corroborates Henry Adam’s (an American historian) view on how ‘power is a sort of tumour that ends by killing the victim’s sympathies’ (Owen and Davidson, 2009). A case study is the Buhari administration of Nigeria; when some of his views before he assumed office are juxtaposed with

his disposition as someone in power on issues like subsidies, fuel price, foreign medical treatment; the divergence can be better imagined

Researchers also found out that excessive praise from subordinates, sycophantic drooling from favour-seekers, control over vast resources among other factors conspire to cause “functional” changes to the brains of people in power sociologically, Lord David Owen (2008) identified “hubris syndrome as “manifest contempt for others, loss of contact with reality, restless or reckless actions, and displays of incompetence.”

Nevertheless, powerful people can, and indeed do, extricate themselves from the psychological snares of power if they so desire. Professor Keltner said one of the most effective psychological strategies for people in power to reconnect with reality and reverse the brain damage of power is to periodically remember moment of powerlessness in their lives. They should also have what American journalist Louis McHenry Howe once called a “toe holder,” that is, someone who doesn’t fear them, who expects no favour from them, and can tell them uncomfortable truths without fear of consequences. Winston Churchill’s toe holder was his wife, who once wrote a letter to him that read, in part, “I must confess that I have noticed a deterioration in your manner, and you are not as kind as you used to be”. This kind of ‘frank talk’ is taken as hate speech on many occasions, more so when it comes from a perceived enemy’s camp, or an opposition party as far as politics is concerned.

Theoretical Framework

This paper draws insight from prama-sociolinguistic theory which is within the purview of Adegbija (1982), which was coined to refer to three types of contexts in order to suggest the complex and multi-faceted nature of factors which come into play in any encoding and decoding process – the pragmatic, the socio-cultural, and the linguistic –that play a dynamic role in verbal communication. Universally, utterances reliably reflect personality which is consequent upon what we listen to and what we read. The personality of individuals is shaped by their linguistic environment and their relationship in all labour relations. The interactions are within what can be termed as social circumstances that are in one way or the other linked with our linguistic values.

Specifically, people in government and those doing business with government are people who have gained global recognition. So, whatever they say or act upon has great implication on the masses. The masses too, especially the elitist

group are those always reacting to government policies and actions, and this is done in modern times via the media, like the Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and other applications related to the internet. Every word we utter is influenced by the linguistic and non-linguistic context in which we utter it, which determines, to a great extent, how the utterance is understood and reacted to by the hearer. The special social and cultural relationships shared by participants and their impact on the encoding and decoding of utterances go a long way to determine whether a given speech is meant to destabilize (hate) a process or to effect a change for better. The nature of the discourse at hand, in this case, politics, and how it relates to the interest of both the speaker and the hearer as well as to the context of interaction call into question mutual beliefs, understandings, or lack of these on the part of the participants.

There is therefore consideration for mutual beliefs or lack of these (understandings) between the participants which this paper focuses; that is, those in government in one way or the other, and those responding to their policies and statements perceived to be in the opposition to government. Our grammatical analysis in this paper, concerning the face book comments (texts) in reaction to unfriendly hike in price of commodities is used metaphorically to prove that no one is perfect and that an individual cannot perform beyond his endowment, be it linguistically or politically. Therefore, the framework equally alludes to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This is because SFL “recognizes meaning and uses as central features of language and...tackles grammar from this point if view.” (Bloor and Bloor, 2004:2)

Problem Statement

Works on the nature of English in Nigeria abound (Oladipo 2010; Fajobi 2013) but hardly any of the studies has linked the low competence of many face book writers of English as a metaphor for leadership laxity. Though the Nigerian English may be classified as a deviation from the standard (British) English, its grammaticality has not gone to the level of non-intelligibility. It is a standard on its own. Identifiable errors characteristic of face book writers in their reactions to/comments on political issues and matters of public interest have become alarming to the extent that, for an expert to start commenting on each of the writers, it will amount to washing the dirty linen outside, and by extension, a hate-speech to the victims. Such areas include the syntactic, lexical and semantic levels.

The grammatical Infelicities of facebook writers commenting on hike in the price of cement are therefore focused along line the so-called ‘hate-speeches’ from opposition camps of political power holders in this paper with a view to

proffering lasting solutions in the name of the need for critical understanding of communication motives, restructuring of our thought patterns. In this direction, Odebunmi (2020:55) maintains that ‘the Brosnahamian submission that a graduate would speak better English than non-graduates is flawed as sometimes non-graduates and even individual who are not formally educated speak more impressive English than the graduates.’ This translates into deficiencies on the part of the so-called elite with faulty grammar as well as political power holders who should be concerned with issues rather than personalities assumed to be in the opposition. All these raised such questions as (i) what types of deficiencies are identifiable in governance as well as the expressions of individuals commenting through facebook texts on issues of public? (ii) what is the implication of grammatical infelicities on the part of commentators on the people in the corridors of political power?

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this paper is to juxtapose deficiencies in governance with identifiable deficiencies in grammar of many facebook texts on issues of public opinion with a view to rationalising the implication of one on the other. The specific objectives are (i) to identify statements from government functionaries purportedly classified as hate speech (ii) identify the types of error prevalent in facebook texts by individuals on related issues of public interest and analyse (iii) to examine the implicature of deficiencies of one on the other with a view to proffering solutions that would enhance growth in all ramifications.

Methodology

Given the dichotomy of issues juxtaposed in this paper, that is, misconceptions about selected political hate speeches and related examples of error-laden comments/replies on such issues drawn from online posts in Nigeria, relevant literature has been identified and utilized to ground the concept of decline in leadership styles as well as language usage by commentators. Two (2) excerpts purposively selected from newspapers and twenty-four (24) randomly selected internet posts serve as texts. The excerpts were concerned with economy issue, particularly submissions between the Nigeria Finance Minister as well as the Central Bank Governor; while the comments were in line with the skyrocketing prices of commodities, specifically, cement. The public opinions on the given issue in terms of comments/replies from individuals which were screenshot serve as texts, code-named ‘fbt’ (facebook text). These were numbered 1-24, being the reactions of people under anonymity (to remove the stigma of hate/hatred in the course of correcting the errors identified) for the period covering April 9-16, 2021. The excerpts and texts were employed to critically discuss the semantics of so-called hate speeches and errors found in the

discourses sampled, the error types were subjected to frequency counts, using simple percentage to determine the domineering type.

Data Presentation and Analysis,

The analysis is dichotomized; one axis relates the purported reactions and counter-reactions, otherwise regarded as hate-speech, by political power holders. The other axis is the generated comments from individuals on the subject-matter under discourse. In this case, the issues were those of “printing of currency” and “sky-rocketing cement price”, which are the by-products of mis-governance. The second part which is in relation to linguistic deficiency becomes a metaphor for human-deficiency even, in the governance of the nation-Nigeria. The face book comments are therefore, identified and analyzed. Discussion on the effect of the findings and implications follows.

Excerpt 1

According to Nick Agule:

‘Within the last week a war of words has ensued over the management of the Nigeria economy with Gov. Obaseki of Edo State firing the first Salvo by accusing the FG of the catastrophic management of economy alleging that the FG is printing money to fund federal allocations.

Nigeria,s Finance Minister Zainab Ahmed fired back in these words:

These issue that was raised by the Edo State Governor, for me, is very sad because it is not a fact. What we distribute at FAAC is revenue that is generated and in fact, distribution of revenue is a public information. We publish revenue generated by FIRS, the customer and the NNPC and we distribute at FAAC. It is not true.

Obaseki returned fire that as an investment banker he stands by his words.

It is glaring that between Obaseki and the Finance Minister, one person was not telling the truth, given that their views were diametrically opposed.

All this while as the crossfire raged, CBN governor was mute until he was captured on camera issuing threats to Obaseki and other governors who were bailed out in 2015/16 that recovery action will begin immediately against them if they don’t stop accusing the government of printing money. The CBN governor finally caved in by admitting that “The concept of printing of money is about lending money and that is our job... It will be irresponsible for the CBN or any Central Bank or Fed. to stand idle and refuse to support its government at a time like this”

Excerpt 2

Increase in fuel price inevitable: Dangote

(People Gazette. A Gazette NGR).

Days after Nnamdi Kanu blasted Dangote for exploiting Nigerians, see what Dangote said:

Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, the proscribed Indigenous people of Biafra's leader recently slammed Aliko Dangote, Africa's richest businessman and President of the Dangote Group, for allegedly exploiting Nigerians in the selling of his cement.

He claims that Dangote cement is sold twice as much in Nigeria as it is in other countries. It costs 55 Kwacha, which is equivalent to 1150 Naira in Zambia. In Nigeria, it is sold for between 3000 and 5000 Naira.

However, according to the people Gazette, Dangote has spoken about the rise in fuel prices and the provision that would be made in the Petroleum Industry Bill that Dangote introduced in February. The rise in fuel prices, according to Aliko Dangote, is unavoidable because it will enable the Federal Government to work properly. Since the government cannot survive without taxes and higher prices for petroleum goods, the government is forced to raise them.

It is discernible that the two excerpts above concerning the 'printing of money' and the 'increase in fuel price' which Dangote was trying to defend and rationalize generate reactions on one major product of his companies, cement, which automatically must increase in price owing to the fact that production depends on fuel consumption in a country with epileptic electricity supply. Hence, the focus on the screenshot comments through face book, and the attendant implication of the respondents' submission.

Punctuation/Grammatical Deficiencies on Face book comments

Fbt 1 (15:09 April 09)

I've always said to my friends that, Dangote is one major problem Nigeria is poor...

Fbt 2 (REPLY):

IF MORE PLAYERS ARE GIVEN LICENCE IN BUSINESS INDUSTRY WITH EFFECTIVE LAW WHICH ALLOWS EVERY INSTITUTIONS (INSTITUTION) TO OPERATE AND GIVE ACCOUNT OF ALL THEIR DEALINGS (,) NIGERIA WILL BE A BETTER PLACE,(.) WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW SELFISH (SELFISHNESS), RELIGION, ETHNIC (ETHNICITY), TRIBALISM, POLITICAL (POLITICS) AND (A) HOST OF OTHERS TO OVER(-)SHADOW OUR ECONOMIC WELL(-)BEING AND UNITY OF OUR BELOVED COUNTRY(,) NIGERIA...

Fbt 3 (22:39 April 09):

d(D)angote with they're (his) people they're (is) going to take over this country with all their (his) plans than (that) if all they're (he is) planning is worth (worths it) (,) definitely (definitely) (,) we are going to (into) another slave (slavery) both b(B)iafra and o(O)duduwa people (,) w(W)hat we can (can we) do to resolve all this issues (these issues) (?)

Fbt 4

REPLY:

w(W)hich grammar is this?

Fbt 5 (08:47 April 10):

Dangote is Nigeria biggest problem but d (the) **North** did see (do not) it because they **cannot see the future**

Fbt 6: (02 02 April 10):

y(Y)ou see what we are talking about (,) I know it (?) that Aliko Dangote doesn't want any success of (for) this country...

Fbt 7: (13:08. April 10):

Up till today we never seen (have never seen) a real billionaire like MKO, the one who carried masses matter for head, (the one who loves the masses wholeheartedly) unlike the ones we have this era who are just about themselves (self-centered).

Fbt 8

(REPLY):

n(N)one, my brother, none(,)

h(H)e did it in (with) cement (,) he will do it in (with) oil

Fbt 9

(REPLY) 21:44 April 10:

h(H)e has done it already(,)

Fbt 10 (10:27 April 10):

i(I) have said it before (,) DANGOTE is killing innocent people small small (little by little) and FG did (is) not looking to this (these) challenges unless the product is not buying (selling) in (the) market...

Fbt 11 (08:30 April 10):

Dangote is evil, (;) let allow more importation of cement in Nigeria and let them (?) compete with Dangote and you will see cement will crash!!... if he like (likes) (,) let him close his factories, we don't care because he is enemies (an enemy) of the masses.

Fbt 12

(9:42 April 10)

EVERYBODY WILL DIE & ABANDON
ALL DZ (THESE) WEALTH

Fbt 13

REPLY (16:29 April 10):

Nnamdi Kanu is (a) prophet, that is(,) God's messenger. What he said is 100% correct, check the price of cement?_(!)

Fbt 14

(10:48 April 10):

Dangote are (is) full (of) wickedness (,) trying to wreck this country with (the) price of his products.(!)

Fbt 15 (17:36 April 11):

Nnamdi Kanu is 100% right...

Fbt 16 (REPLY):

y(Y)ou think anyone can just wake up and create cement company, without government licence, that is impossible, Nnamdi Kanu is right, they have monopolize (monopolized) some products so they can continue stealing from Nigerians(.

Fbt 17

(REPLY) (07:42 April 11)

Yes(,) he is very much right about what he said about d(D)angote, (D)angote is one of the major problem (problems) in this country...

Fbt 18 (16:29 April 11)

(REPLY)

“Dangote is an idiot fellow to (be) sincere”

Fbt 19 (20:38 April 13):

No government in Nigeria...

Fbt 20 (07:41 April 14):

This stupid government did not allow Ibeto that was producing cement and the price was very low and affordable for the poor masses, to continue producing because they want to monopolize it with one man (d(D)angote) for their selfish reasons!!!

Fbt 21(11:31 April 15):

I am totally in agreement with nnamdi (Nnamdi)
Alhaji Aliko Dangote is a monopolist ...

Kanu over this issue.

Fbt 22

(REPLY) (09:39 April 15):

Xxx xxx xxx (emojis, shedding tears)

Fbt 23 (23:04 April 16)

d(D)angote, d(D)angote, d(D)angote, how many times (did) I call you? no body
dey carry money goo. (Nobody would be buried with money)

Fbt 24

(REPLY) (13:05 April 16):

h(H)mmmmm(,) it is well(.

Findings and Discussion

There are seven types of errors related to punctuation in the twenty-four texts presented above and tabularised below while in relation to grammar, five errors feature. These are shown respectively shown below:

Table 1 : Frequency distribution patterns of misused punctuation marks on facebook (Fbt).

S/N	Punctuation Mark	Place of occurrence in fb. Text	Frequency of occurrence in fb text	of
1.	Comma	Fbt 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 24	12	25.5%
2.	The full stop	Fbt 2, 3, 8, 9, 16, 24	6	2.8%
3.	Hyphen	Fbt 2,	1	2.1%
4.	Question mark	Fbt 3, 6	2	4.3%
5.	Exclamation mark	Fbt 13, 14	2	4.3%
6.	Capitalization	Fbt 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24	22	46.8%
7.	Alphabetism	Fbt 5, 12	2	4.3%
	Total		47	100%

As indicated on the table (1), capitalization is the most misused punctuation mark (40.8%) while hyphen is the least misused (2.1%) as far compound word

is concerned. Misuse of comma follows with 12.8% while the question mark, exclamation mark and alphabetism are misused equal number of times (4.3%).

Table 2 : Frequency distribution patterns of grammatical error in facebook text (fbt)

S/N	Grammatical error	Place of occurrence in fb. Text	Frequency of occurrence in fb text	
1.	Concord	Fbt 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17	15	41.7%
2.	Wrong word	Fbt 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10	10	27.8%
3.	Omission	Fbt 2, 13, 14, 18, 23	7	19.4%
4.	Pidginization	Fbt 7, 10, 23	3	8.3%
5.	Ambiguity	Fbt 11	1	2.8%
	Total		36	100%

Grammatical errors range from concord, wrong word usage, omission, pidginization to ambiguity. Concord error, especially between subject and verb, is the most misused (41.7%). The least is the issue of ambiguity (2.8%), next to concord error is wrong word usage (27.8%) followed by omission of essential particles like article (19.4%) and pidginization, 8.3%. With the notation of place of occurrence in the facebook texts (fbt) included on the tables, instances of misuse have been established. The corrected versions of such misused punctuation and grammatical constituents are in parenthesis, following the underlined instances of errors.

For instance, absence of comma in fbt 2, 3, 6, etc and the full stop in fbt 2, 3, 8, etc. could be attributed to the fun attached to facebook communication or because of haste. This necessitates at times, the next sentence beginning with the lower case letter, a violation of capitalization that should initiate a new sentence. Some text are completely capitalized which is usual in formal writing except for title and emphasis. Alphabetism, as it occurred in fbt, 5, and fbt 2 where ‘d’ and ‘DZ’ are used for ‘the’ and ‘these’ respectively, is a situation where English words are reduced to sets of letters. The issue in such usage is that ‘meaning’ remains exclusive to such particular users.

Concerning error at the level of grammar, particularly subject/verb concord error, which features in fbt 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, it is a further confirmation of the decline in written English of users in a second language situation like Nigeria. A lot of factors could be attributed: compromise of teaching/learning standards, brain drain phenomenon, incessant strike actions; high rate of student enrolment versus how level of facilities among

others. The outcome of this study confirms the stands of scholars like Ayodele (2001), Kolawole and Olatunji (2007). Jeyifo (2011), Momoh (2013), and Odeunmi (2020) to mention but a few with respect to the decline in the quality of English in Nigeria.

Implication for Growth

Everyone needs to care, which is quite easy to do once you realize that embracing change not only affects your own career positively but also helps create opportunities for others. People talk in a tough manner on issues in order to effect a change for better in a system. Change agents are those who fuel innovation and attempt to disrupt the status quo through their ‘insinuations’ which if not critically considered may be termed ‘hate speech’. Another stimulant of empathy to people in office is to periodically get out of the protected silos of power, and solitarily observe the everyday interactions of the commoners- their humour, laughter, arguments etc, without the paraphernalia of office.

As far as communication is concerned, there are two mediums: spoken and written. While texts intended to be read aloud are more likely to be punctuated for prosody, texts that will remain unspoken are likely to be punctuated for grammar. Moore (2016:2) asserts that “the difference between the two rests in the intended mode of reading (in silence or aloud)”. This paper’s focus is partly on non-adherence to punctuation/grammatical rules by writers/respondents to public issues raised on facebook. Can’t this non-conformist attitude to standard usage of English be termed “hate-speech” to the norms? The fact that many scholars have access to these anomalies, but hardly could you see them pointing out these errors publicly to the violators is a lesson that suggests the need for tolerance to misdemeanor of human beings. Should the linguists decide to be commenting on the “errors” persistent in the facebook writers’ comments, it should rather be taken as a means to improving their linguistic standard, for better communication and understanding, not as an avenue to ridicule. It is in the light of this that speeches that are classified as “hate (speech)” from opposition group or individual should be taken in good faith, so that a peaceful co-existence can be forged through good governance in Sub-Sahara Africa.

Conclusion

The paper reveals that hatred which gives birth to hate speech utterances is a two-edged sword semantically as argued in this paper; on one side as non-compliance with expectations of the masses by the people in power and non-compliance with the grammatical standard of the English language- a by-product of incompetence in governance with regard to quality education; thus calling for re-structuring at both ends. It is therefore concluded that the lesson

taught by the action of an Indian, Uttam Mandal is worthy of emulation as far the bone of contention between the ruling party and the main opposition is concerned in Nigeria. Below is the story:

Man helps his wife marry her lover

(<https://bit.ly/3ub56MD>)

An Indian man Uttam Mandal and Sapna Kumari, from Bhagalpur, in Bihar State got married in 2014, and had two children together. They were happy together for a while, but at some point, Sapna fell in love with a relative of Uttman's, a younger man who came around their house every once in a while, and the two started having an affair. The husband learned about Sapna's escapade, fought over the issue many times, but seeing that Sapna couldn't get over her lover, Uttman decided to do the unthinkable, step aside and help his wife marry the man she loved. The lesson from this story is that, for the expected growth and technological advancement of African nations, Nigeria inclusive, the ruling party that fails to deliver on its promise to the masses should not hesitate to handover to the opposition in a truly free, fair and credible election. Recommendations include the need for a remedial course on English, in-service training on language and communication skills for the employed among facebook commentators and workshop on leadership training with emphasis on pragmatics.

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