

Language, Attitude and Behaviour of Youths Towards Voting in Nigeria

Bolanle Olusola YEMI-FADIPE¹ Felicia Bosede Kehinde FASAE²

1. Department of Social Science Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
solabola68@yahoo.com

2. Department of Office information Management, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, Nigeria
fasaakehinde@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study emphasized the contribution of language to the attitude and behaviour of youths towards voting. Language has power on attitudes and behaviour of youths as the politicians address and give directives to their supporters and followers through language which in turn influences the attitudes and behaviour of supporters and followers towards the political decision making. Youths are persuaded and used as tools to foment trouble in all part of the country so as to destabilise the peace of the society at large. They are even used by politicians as kingpins or thugs in different electoral offences based on their utterances before, during and after the political process. The negative attitude of these youths manifests in behaviours like thuggery, assassination, protest, indolence, intolerance, assault, defacing of posters, chanting of slogans, threat and apathy. These acts are considered to jeopardise national development as well as the credibility of the electioneering processes. Language may possibly, reverse electoral decision in favour of a particular individual, group or political party. Voter education could be an effort to create among citizens a new set of culturally defining “habits of the heard” which will enhance citizenship, foster a sense of connectedness to a community stretching beyond the schools and ultimately support the practices, basic value and institutions necessary for a democratic process. The paper looked into the concept of voting, voter education, youths’ attitude and behaviour towards voting in Nigeria, language and the electoral process, language and politics, language position in Nigeria, effects of language, and strategies for improving youths’ attitude and behaviour towards voting in Nigeria.

Keywords: Language, Attitude, Behaviour, Voting, Voter Education

DOI: 10.7176/RHSS/12-4-07

Publication date: February 28th 2022

Introduction

In a democratic society, electorates are entitled to actively participate in the electoral process. In Nigeria democratic system, it is the duty, rights and responsibilities of youths to participate in political process in a way that they are agile, active and the working class who contribute immensely to economic, political, social and physical development of the country. Ojo (2012) noted that based on Nigeria constitution, electorates can vote and be voted for. Mohammed, Yusuf, Vau & Lawan (2020) noted, however, that since the return to civil rule in 1999, political parties and political actors in Nigeria have developed different campaign strategies on how to win elections to capture state power. Political parties’ campaigns in Nigeria have been characterized by regional, religious, hate, character smearing and assassination, tribal and ethnic bigotry for the purpose of political mobilization which undermines their expected positive roles in a democratic system. They argued that political communication, especially hate speech is becoming a campaign strategy that originates from the nature and political dynamics of the national question in Nigeria.

Adurodola and Charles (2013) noted that the importance of the language medium for communicating political messages cannot be underrated and that, by implication, language is the vibrant part in all spheres of life endeavours. It is essential to building relationships, expressing thoughts, ideas or a need and responses provided as feedback, which may also be positive or negative. Accordingly, lexical choices are powerful weapons that can be manipulated by certain individuals to show satisfaction or to advance certain leadership styles with the intent of attracting massive support.

The attitudes of youths during political process is appalling. The way politicians use the youths as violent tools is unpalatable. Youths are the instruments in the hands of the politicians to foment trouble during and after political process. The language of communication during electoral process is a vital issue that influences youth’s attitude and behaviour towards political practice. Speeches made by the politicians during campaign also dictate their achievement. At times some of their utterances may be negative or positive, depending on how people take it and react to it. These problems of the language, attitudes and behaviour of youths during political process seem to be as a result of lack of adequate use of language in voter education in order to increase voting. Yemi-Fadipe (2019) posited that youths display negative attitudes which jeopardize the success of political process. They are

characterized with thuggery, election rigging, assassination, protest, snatching of ballot boxes, under age voting, love for money, kidnapping and wastages resulting from voided voters.

Language is an important tool in political thought. Opeibi (2008) noted that political thoughts and ideologies can only be expressed and further translated into social actions for social change and social continuity through the facilities provided by language. It can be said also that political interaction requires language structures, and obviously political talks play a vital role in shaping and transforming political ideals into political realities. Obiegbu & Njemanze (2015) averred that language does not only distinguish man from other creatures but also endowed man with the authority to communicate. They noted that with language, man controls his entire environment, hence it is more than an instrument for the conveying of ideas but for working on the feelings of others, for self-expression and achieving self-assessment. It was reiterated that language affects the opportunities and possibilities of acquiring knowledge, being in the world, exploring the world and enjoying the world. This explains why every community tries hard to safeguard her language. Their efforts are justified by the general assertion that, language is universally recognized as a powerful index of culture and identity and that as repository of culture, societies are set apart from one another because of language.

Adurodola and Charles (2013) emphasized that the quantum of political expressions employed by political elites determine to a reasonable extent, their level of attaining their set goals and political end. Political language is used quite deliberately and intentionally either to praise or blame. It can be creative, constructive or destructive, perhaps, because it is a weapon with which one attacks or defends oneself from opponents. Austin (2014) asserted that many of the youths have developed some slogans (language) to entice the people which easily influence their behaviour towards choosing candidates of their choice. Through the language these youths speak, many of the youths have developed the habit of political apathy in which they ignore voting, this hindered entrenchment and sustenance of representative democracy in Nigeria. Diamond (2012) opined that the way many of the youths interact with the people through their utterances scare some people making them to believe that politicians are wicked that they can kill. This occurs before, during and after political violence.

Concept of Voting

Voting is the opportunity to elect or re-elect government officials and allow voters to a voice at any level of government and the areas that affect the life of citizens. It is the duties, rights and responsibilities of a good citizen during election and it gives equal chance for every voter to choose their leaders to contribute to development of the nation (Aibieyi, 2008). In a democratic society, the electorates are actively participating in the electoral processes by voting to elect their credible leaders so that they will have a government that follows the will of the people and one that use arbitrary power on the people or force people to follow. Omoweh (2003) opined that the beauty in practicing democracy is that the majority will have their way and minority will have their say. In a democratic society, politics allows for criticism from the citizens (minority or majority). An activated democracy shows where the people approve to the government operating the nation, that is, the incumbent government has the say and controlling the nation. Citizens who have gotten to voting age are considered as eligible voters and when they are able to cast their votes they are now recognized as active voters. Hence they are given the chance to select their credible leaders to vote and to be voted for. Richard (2003) noted that when voters participate in election, it allows them to express their political opinion to choose the candidates of their choice that have their best interest in mind because their future lies in opting for a candidate who favours them at the tenure of his office.

Voter Education

As important as voting is, it cannot take place effectively without civic/voter education. Voter education is the education provided to electorates that enables them to qualify and participate meaningfully in elections by voting. It enables the electorates to understand and practice their civic values, rights and obligations in their daily lives. It also facilitates the development of knowledge, capabilities, competences or skills, values and behaviors of individuals so that they become personally fulfilled and constructive members of the society. Mulyata (2011) sees voter education as the education given to the electorates to enable them participate meaningfully in the elections by voting. Citing Hamwiinga (2002), voter education is defined as a subject that relates to human beings and their relationship with the nation, physical, social, political and cultural environment. It facilitates the development of knowledge, capabilities, competences or skills and values or behaviors of individuals so that they become personally fulfilled and constructive members of the society, the overall goal of which is to enable individuals understand and practice their civic values, rights and obligations in their daily lives.

Abdugafar (2011) observed that voter education is geared towards raising awareness on the rights of the citizens especially the youths to actively participate in governmental activities; towards achieving respect for human rights, transparency and accountability in public affairs; promoting leadership and followership skills among the youths and educating and mobilising Nigerians against ethnic, religious and sectional intolerance and manipulations to lay solid foundation for good governance in Nigeria. Nkwede, et al (2017) citing Omozuwa &

Ezejideaku (2007) opine that politicians all over the world embellish their language in inimitable way to give extra effect and force to their message in order to achieve their objectives of winning more votes. Essentially, politicians in Nigeria take advantage of the low level of education of majority of the electorates as well as poverty to manipulate the thinking of the electorates. Taking advantage of low level of education, poverty, lack of exposure of most Nigerians which are invariably on the majority constituted the acceptance and absorption of political language of politicians in Nigeria by the electorates.

It appears that mass literacy education among the youths in form of voter education is the only tool of breaking ignorance and apathy noted with electoral process in Nigeria, which, all along, have militated against the development of her potentials as a nation. Voter education is a vital key to knowing one's rights, duties, and responsibilities and believed to represent an access to the liberation of the mind and body. It is a way of ensuring that individual Nigerians know, not only their rights, but their electoral responsibilities, obligations and the limitations imposed by certain forces in the society. Akintayo (2010) believed that, perhaps it is the recognition of this vital role that led to the clamour for inclusion of voter education in the school curriculum as a separate subject. By and large, voter education in a democratic society promotes peaceful and happy community, social responsibilities, reduction in poverty, high sense of co-operation and social justice within the political system.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that for an election to be successful and democratic, voters must understand their rights and responsibilities, and must be sufficiently knowledgeable and well informed to cast ballots that are legally valid and to participate meaningfully in the voting process. Yemi-Fadipe (2018a) opined that the goal of voter education is to make information available and accessible to all constituents and campaigns should seek to achieve universal coverage of the electorates. To do this effectively requires reaching out to disadvantaged groups as well as mainstream voters. For example, voter education should take into account factors such as high rates of illiteracy or the use of different languages in a country, even if there is only one official language. Minority groups, internally displaced persons and other marginalised segments of the society should be specially targeted. Youths that are eligible to vote for the first time may need special messages explaining how to register and cast a ballot. Voter education should also include publicity which encourages people to vote.

Youths Attitude and Behaviour towards Voting in Nigeria

Youths require adequate voter education to know the values and importance of democracy and these values can easily be transformed to their daily activities. For them to play their expected and functional role as democratic citizens, there must be serious participation in the entire democratic process because their decision of the youths to participate or not to participate depends on their awareness, adherence and internalization of these democratic values and this may have serious consequences on democracy and the general polity.

The attitude and behaviour of youths in Nigeria in the political arena are, no doubt, characterized with violence. Yemi-Fadipe (2018b) observed that operationally, electoral violence connotes all forms of violence (physical, psychological, administrative, legal and structural) at different stages engaged in by participants, their supporters and sympathisers (including security and election management body staff) in the electoral process. These forms of violence occur before, during and after or post-elections and could also be intra or inter party. According to International Foundation for Election System (2011), electoral violence is threat or violence (harm) that is aimed at any person or property involved in the election process or at disrupting any part of the electoral or political process during the election period. Igbazor's (2009) study showed that the causes could be attributed to greed, electoral abuses, rigging of elections, abuse of political power, alienation, marginalization, exclusion and political economy of oil.

Awopetu (2011) posited that political parties do have violence among themselves when they have deadlines on which party is to win the election in such a case that the sympathizers or supporters face themselves with slogans, chant abusive songs, derogatory speeches in the aim of supporting their candidates/ party. Yemi-Fadipe (2017) citing Ojo (2012) advanced lack of development of democratic attitude (values) as one major obstacle that has marred democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Thus it is the obstacle to youths' positive participation in our democracy. Both the elites and youths have surprisingly shown weak commitment to basic symbols and values of democracy. Mohammed, Yusuf, Vau, & Lawan (2020) observed that in Nigeria, political campaigns are guided and directed towards individual personalities, tribal and religious identities and regional issues rather than national interests, which, instead of being persuasive and objective, generates violence. Political campaigns as a process of political mobilization is abused by the Nigerian political class to achieve selfish ends. These campaign strategies of recent include the spread of hate speech and fake news, hate songs, quit notices, political campaigns and social media interactions across the country to manipulate and garner support for their party and candidates standing for elections.

Yemi-Fadipe (2017) citing Ojo (2012) noted the above as a result of greed, inordinate ambition to win power, thuggery, dishonesty, personalization of political/public offices, insincerity, disrespects for others,

intolerance to mention but a few in our national polity which in turn manifest in the forms of electoral rigging, and kidnapping/killing of political opponents. Others are writing or sponsoring of publications and damaging articles in our media, tearing, removal or defacing of posters belonging to political opponents/parties, youths enlisting into various cult groups to be used as party kingpin or political thugs.

Königslöw (2016) noted two aspects of voting behavior that may be influenced by communication: vote choice and voter turnout. These are strongly interrelated, and together they determine the results of an election or referendum. For a candidate (or a party) to be successful, they need to gain the support of the citizens, but they also need to motivate their supporters to cast their vote on the election day. Undecided voters are more likely to stay home, but so are firm party supporters who believe their vote will have no impact on the overall result.

Inability of politicians to live up to expectations and promises could eventually spark up negative attitude and behaviour in youths. Mohammed, et al. (2020) say politicians deliberately employ certain types of language or medium to communicate during campaigns with a view to mobilize support in an electoral contests. Opeibi (2008) maintained that political speeches during election campaigns, at inauguration ceremonies and/or any other important public appearances, including budget presentations at both the federal, state, or local government levels, 'count as doing' because they are commissive utterances. The citizens place high premium on such utterances and would expect the fulfillment of the electoral promises. Credible and skillful politicians would recognize the intrinsic connection between what they say and what they do. This is because commissive utterances commit the speaker to the performance of what he/she says while making the statements. Unfortunately, many of the Nigerian politicians and government officials are unaware of the power of their utterances as they do not realize that there is a strong connection between what is said, what is meant, and the action conveyed by what is said in political environments. This also may lead to violence among youths.

Language and the Electoral Process

Communication as a complex phenomenon remains vital to a sustenance of relationships and human existence; it is in fact, the oil that lubricates human interactions but despite this significance, communication is a double-edged sword which can be used either positively or negatively (Adurodola & Charles, 2013). Obiegbu and Njemanze (2015) reiterated that language can be used to direct the activities of other people or influence their behavior. In that case the language is performing a directive role. The fact that language can serve man in these various capacities indicate that man can adequately fulfill its social, ethical, political, educational or economical, functions.

A campaign message is an important and potent tool that politicians use to express views and feelings to the public with the intention of reshaping and redirecting the electorates' opinions to align with theirs. It is also to persuade the target audience or influence voters' act in the candidates' favour. Every electorate has expectations which may be clearly expressed or otherwise but such expectations are usually measured against certain symbols particularly, language expressions, which may present different meanings in the context of political campaigns. Political campaign language is often characterized and shaped by rhetoric, persuasion, propaganda, metaphor, euphemism, parallelism, jingles and slogans. (Adurodola & Ojukwu, 2013).

It is important that voter education is provided in the familiar language for better understanding. Myanti (2011) observed that The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) has recognized that while many achievements have been scored in voter education through the production and delivery of messages through posters, fliers, brochures and t-shirts, there is in general a lack of sufficiently coordinated practices to effectively deliver voter education at district levels which hindered informed decision making and risk reducing the participation in the electoral process which could include low voter turn-out in elections and high numbers of spoiled ballot papers. Myanti's (2011) study revealed that 76% of the respondents indicated that English language was used to provide voter education while 24% of the respondents indicated that Nyanja and Bemba are languages are used to provide voter education. It was further noted that more and more people in Africa every day enter the ranks of eligible voters but less and less of these people actually participate in voting. This kind of political disengagement in terms of people's implied ignorance about their civic right to vote and their conviction that politics is not the effective way of doing things both indicate the lack of absence of good, comprehensive and effective civic education. Because of this, a lot of citizens do not participate in voting and so voter participation remains extremely low. It was pointed out that because voter educators are few, and the period for carrying out the voter education exercise is not adequate considering the vast areas that are supposed to be covered, voter education activities do not always reach a lot of people especially the remote rural areas of the country.

Language and Politics

Language is vital to the implementation of effective democratic principles, sociopolitical policies, economic advancement, and national development in any federally-operated system of governance (Opeibi, 2008). Effective communication is essential in consensus building and public opinion. Language as the vehicle for thought expression generates feelings which are exploited for political gains in an electioneering campaign. It

means that word choice and their purposes are explored in political communication to secure a berth for asserting justifications in a political context (Ndimele and Owuamalam (2015). The duo analysed how “See who wants to be President of Nigeria,” was used, through political advertisement, to expose incompetence and ignorance as unacceptable in a decent and democratic society, like Nigeria. It is an exercise in political communication, using language and word choice as the beacon for the rejection of a candidate in Nigeria’s presidential election of April, 2015.

Königslöw (2016) opined that theories of political participation and communication stress the importance of mobilization, especially by political actors and fellow citizens. People fail to participate because they lack the resources or the interest in politics, or because nobody asked them to. Communication about an election will encourage citizens to participate and cast their votes. At the same time, the influence of communication on vote choice seems to occur mainly in the form of indirect effects, such as knowledge gains, agenda-setting, and priming and framing effects. A direct persuasive influence is comparatively rare and mostly short-lived. But this may change as the proportion of undecided, more susceptible voters continues to rise in many countries. Whenever citizens are called to vote on political matters, whenever they have to elect their political representatives or reach a collective decision through a referendum, their decision will be shaped by communication.

Utychl (2018) questioned how the words we use to talk about politics influence political attitudes and evaluations, and, focusing specifically on negative affective language, i.e. words which individuals have preexisting negative reactions toward, he noted that the words used to describe politics are often strong and affect-laden, though it is unclear how this language influences public opinion. Utychl noted its appearance in the 2016 presidential campaign of Donald Trump, who routinely called his opponents lightweight chokers, losers, and liars (all words that individuals have strong negative reactions toward). Utychl argued that these words, or negative affective language, will influence how the public makes decisions about policies and political figures, above and beyond the effects of pure negativity. However, negative information need not always be overt. Negative rhetoric about a politician or policy should be impactful, but the words chosen to describe political events should matter as well. I argue that using negative affective language, for example, referring to a debate as “ugly” rather than “contentious,” will induce a negative mood in individuals, making negative information more powerful.

Language Position in Nigeria

Language is at the center of political mobilization especially in a multilingual context, where minority and majority languages co-exist. Human society cannot survive without communication, which underlies any political activity. We interact, encode and transmit our experiences through language (Opeibi, 2008). Obiegbu & Njemanze (2015) averred that communication in a monolingual society, poses no problem to man as everybody would make use of the one available language for that purpose but noted that this is not so in Nigeria where there are about 514 indigenous languages existing side-by-side the English. Although English as a foreign Language has taken the number one position even within the country, the rate of development has not been very easy for the users. This cultural identity which language bequeaths to man has resulted in increasing conflicts especially in multicultural societies such as Nigeria. For instance, since Nigeria asserted her independence from her colonial lords some four decades ago, it has not been possible for her to come out in practical terms with an indigenous national language that can unify the ethnic groups. The Federal Government adopted the language of the three major ethnic groups; Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba as the three major Nigerian languages, with the hope that consequently, one would emerge as the official language of Nigeria. This is not to be because every language in Nigeria, including the minority languages, needs their own language to be recognized as supreme. This type of language loyalty exhibited by the different language communities has conspired to render the indigenous languages in Nigeria impotent in this present era.

Furthermore, Udosen (2002) emphasized that the Federal Government equally introduced the teaching of Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo (major Nigeria languages) and other minority languages into schools so that in the long run one of them (the major languages) will be adopted as Nigeria’s official language. Since then, there have been reactions and counter reactions on what most people view as imposition of another group’s languages on the minority groups. The so called major languages have not thrived significantly beyond their geographical boundaries because of the obvious lack of teachers to teach them in schools. In the same vein, the acclaimed minority languages have not made any appreciable impact even within their domains because of the speakers’ negative attitude to their language among other things. Thus, English has assumed the privileged position as a national, official language of education, government as well as an international language in Nigeria.

After gaining political power, it is a fact that political actors and public officials need to rely constantly on persuasive utterances to retain power. How successful they are in communicating their policies and programmes to the civil society to elicit their support and thus foster the growth of democratic governance depends largely on their ability to understand that utterances are actions.

Effects of Language

Noting the potential effects of communication on voting behavior, Königslöw (2016) affirmed that theoretical advances, as well as the realization that even small effects might change the outcome of close elections, have thus led to a reconsideration of the impact of communication on voting behavior in recent years. On theoretical basis, communication by political actors, journalists, or through interpersonal networks is perceived to have direct and indirect effects on:

- (a) **Voter turnout.** It can mobilize voters to vote (direct effect), but it can also affect their political knowledge and through this their political interest, their sense of political efficacy and civic duty, and their trust in political institutions and actors, which will then influence their participation in the election.
- (b) **Vote choice.** It can persuade voters to vote for a specific candidate or party, or on a specific referendum issue. But it can also have indirect effects by increasing their knowledge of certain candidates or issues, by changing perceptions of the importance of certain issues, candidates, or their attributes (agenda-setting), or by influencing the criteria on which they base their vote (priming) or the interpretation of certain issues (framing).

Utych1 (2018) noted, for example that, seeing a political figure described as a “cancer” will activate negative thoughts one has stored about cancer, inducing a generalized negative mood. The negative mood created by these words should be misattributed to the political concepts that are described using affective language. If politicians can use language to create a mood that makes the masses like them more, or their opponents less, this is problematic for democracy. The use of affective language also may have unintended consequences for politicians who make attacks.

Ndimele and Owuamalam’s (2015) study observed that the interview “See who wants to be President of Nigeria,” seemed to be designed to ridicule Mohammedu Buhari through “scornful jocularly”, in order to make fun of a presidential candidate in a serious political situation, like election. They noted that the essence or purpose of the word test in pronunciation was to “criticize and disapprove” Buhari as unfit to be the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Again, the inability of Muhammadu Buhari to provide the meaning of INEC, the acronym that represents the name of the umpire that would conduct the presidential election in which Buhari was a candidate, was intended by the political commercial to portray him as a “dunce” or one “weak in intellect” and so, incompetent to be President of Nigeria. It was found, among others, that the style of language use, in the application of the selected words in the political commercial, produced psychological noise instead of the physical noise that would have resulted in protest and the rejection of Buhari, as fit for the presidency and that intended or exceptive communication result can only be achieved if used words and the style of presentation conjure the same impression to the message consumer as originally conceived by the message source.

Nkwede, et al (2017) the bias in Nigeria political communication approach tends to negate certain national interest and values and dwelt on issues that are capable of disintegrating the nation.

Strategies for improving youths’ attitude and behaviour towards voting in Nigeria

Nkwede, et al. (2017), citing Omozuwa & Ezejideaku (2007) emphasized the import of language and the manner with which politicians dramatize and coin it to attract voters empathy, recognition and confidence, and opined that politicians all over the world embellish their language in inimitable way to give extra effect and force to their message in order to achieve their objectives of winning more votes.

In view of the importance of language, Ndimele and Owuamalam’s (2015) study suggest that words must have relevance to audience need satisfaction for the communication objective to be realized. Any disparity in audience expectation would produce an ancillary effect, different from the permutation of the message source, like the pleasurable satisfaction of television viewers through a comic presentation in the political commercial, instead of producing candidate rejection at the presidential election in Nigeria.

Politicians should focus on their agenda in promoting the national unity rather than invoking sympathy of the electorates and making speeches that will destroy the unity of the nation. Nkwede, et. al. (2017) affirmed that language is frequently used as a medium of dominance and social force and that essentially, it has often been used as a political tool, hence it plays a significant role in human actions and reactions. They noted that the era of change agenda in Nigerian political spectrum has been greeted with various forms of political communication, spoken or written in a language that best illustrate the very essence of such communication. In Nigeria, political discussions, calculations, permutations and alliances are always communicated through language. Quoting Goodluck Jonathan, during 2011 general election, “during my early school days, I didn’t have shoes” “if I can make it to the presidency of Nigeria, you can also make it”, they observed that these sound bites or slogans emits emotions on the people and make them to identify and empathize with the candidate.

Håkansson (2012) aptly observed that political speeches are supposed to increase the population’s political participation, help them to understand important issues and how a problem is best solved as well as a way for the politicians to persuade others to have the same opinions as them. Opinions formation, social movements, media and agenda formations is largely the product of speeches and publications made in support of an opinion.

Language is a social tool and the way it is used determines the success of the society. Hence the role of the

mass media should be controlled. Nkwede, et. al. (2017) confirmed that the mass media is responsible for structuring voters' perceptions of political reality because through their reporting capability and ability to reach large audience members of the society, they can considerably influence issues that make up the agenda for any particular election.

Utych1's (2018) findings provide insight into how the words used by the news media and politicians can influence political decision making. In an ideal world, word choice should not be relevant to how citizens evaluate politics and develop political attitudes. However, word choice is certainly deliberate – politicians use rhetoric strategically in ways that they believe will increase the general public's support of themselves and their policy positions (Riker, 1996). If what politicians say is important, how they say it should be important as well.

Conclusion

Language has power over attitudes and behaviour, it influences the attitudes and behaviour of the youths towards voting. Many of the youths are controlled by the utterances of the politicians either negatively or positively, it depends on the direction of their speech. Based on the language, many of the youths are violent tools in the hands of the politicians to foment trouble before, during and after electoral process. Minds of the youths are arrested by countenance and sweet words of the politicians aimed to cajole them and when they assume office the youths are ignored. Youths need voter education, and in the proper language, in order to understand the values of voting, due process, that their votes count, their citizenship rights, duties and responsibilities to vote and be voted for, and to contribute to the development of the country.

Recommendations

According to Leech (1983), understanding a level of action of discourse will possibly provide crucial conditions for restructuring part of the conventions that make (political) utterances acceptable, in the light of their appropriateness with respect to the communicative context.

Based on the review, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should sponsor voter educational programmes in the media, such as radio, television and newspaper to educate youths who have not got the opportunity to be involved in voter education programme on voting exercise. These youths will be knowledgeable on due process and electoral credibility during political processes.
2. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should organise conferences and workshops to educate youths on values of voter education and on their rights towards voting, that they all have rights and responsibilities towards voting exercise.
3. There is the need for sensitization on the use and effect of negative language on voters, voting and the voted.
4. Politicians should think of the effect of their language use on the national development and make national interest their priority during political campaigns, hence choose their words with caution. They should focus on their intentions rather than on personalities of their opponents.
5. There might be need to conduct proper electoral education to politicians on the need for constructive expressions during electioneering campaigns in order to evoke some level of trust from citizens.

References

- Abdugafar, O. T., (2011). Civic education as a veritable tool for good governance. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies* 14(1), 35-42.
- Aduradola, Remi R., Chris. C. Ojukwu (2013). Language of Political Campaigns and Politics in Nigeria. *Canadian Social Science*, 9(3), 104-116. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/j.css.1923669720130903.9650> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720130903.9650>
- Aibieyi, S.O. (2008). *Nigerian government and administration*. Ibadan: AMFTTOP Books.
- Akintayo, M. (2011). Voter education as element of electoral process. *http : / the tribune newspaper: com* retrieved July 13 2011.
- Austin, A. (2014). *Ethnicity and democracy in Africa*. Harare: APPS Books publishers.
- Diamond, L. (2008). *The global resurgence of democracy*, Baltimore and London: Baltimore Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Håkansson, J., 2012. The use of personal pronouns in political speeches: A comparative study of the pronominal choices of two American presidents: Unpublished article.
- Mohammed, I.; Yusuf, M.; Vau, P. J. & Lawan, A. (2020) Political Communication during Electioneering Campaign and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria. *FUDMA Journal of Politics and International Affairs (FUJOPIA)*. 3(4), July. 124 – 131. ISSN: 2682-5406.
- Ndimele, R. & Owuamalam, G. (2015). Language use in political advertising: A rhetorical discourse on “see

- who wants to be president of Nigeria”. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. 3(8), 19-31, August. ISSN: 2052-6350(Print) ISSN: 2052-6369(Online)
- Nkwede, J. O.; Nsude, I. & Chukwuemeka, S. N. (2017). Effect of language on politics and communication in the era of change agenda in Nigeria. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*. 25 (6): 1288-1297. DOI: 10.5829/idosi.mejsr.2017.1288.1297
- Obiegbo, I. & Njemanze, Q. U. (2015). An assessment of the communicative and developmental needs of English Language in a multilingual Nigeria. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 2015, 4(4): 161-170. ISSN(e): 2306-0646/ISSN(p): 2306-9910
- Omozuwa, V.O. & Ezejideaku, E.U.C. (2007). A stylistic analysis of the language of political campaigns in Nigeria: Evidence from the 2007 general elections, *New Journal of Africa Studies*. Accessed from www.ajol.info/index.php/og/article on 3rd July, 2016.
- Igbazor, J. (2009). *Nigeria: Crisis and beyond*, London: Charles Knight and Co. Ltd.
- International Foundation for Electoral System (2015). Report on implication for electoral violence in the 2015 general election.
- Mulyata, H. (2011). *The impact of voter education on voter participation: The case of kaunda square stage (1) compound in Luska*. A field research report submitted to the department of Adult Education and Extension Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the bachelors degree in adult education, Unza, May.
- Ojo, E.O. (2012). Leadership crisis and political instability in Nigeria, 1964 – 1966 – The personality, the parties and the policies. *Global Advanced Research Journal of History, Political Science and International Relations*. 1(1), 66 – 107.
- Opeibi, T. (2008). Language, politics and democratic governance in Nigeria: A sociolinguistic perspective. *Journal - Issues in Political Discourse Analysis*. 2(2), 93-109. ISSN: 1941-7209.
- Richard, S. (2003). *A constitutional history of Nigeria*. Ibadan: Longman Group Ltd.
- Utych1, S. M. (2018). Negative affective language in politics. *American Politics Research*. 46(1), 77–102. Reprints and permissions: sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav DOI: 10.1177/1532673X17693830 journals.sagepub.com/home/ap
- Yemi-Fadipe, B. O. (2018a). The influence of religious belief on the perception of youths’ voter Education and attitude towards voting in South-west Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational foundation and management*. Vol.12 (1) 145-151.
- Yemi-Fadipe, B.O. (2018b). Gender as a determinant of the perception of youths’ voter Education and attitude towards voting in South-west, Nigeria. *Journal of Counselling and Applied Psychology*. Vol. 4(2) 178-183
- Yemi-Fadipe, B. O. (2019). Marital Status as a determinant of the perception of youths’ voter Education and Attitude towards voting in South-west, Nigeria. *International Journal of Adult Learning and Countinuing Education*. 3, 70-75.