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Ergativity in President Buhari's (2015) Inaugural Speech: A Systemic Functional Approach

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Abstract

Understanding the language use in political discourse especially inaugural speeches is crucial because of the complex dynamics of power, ideology and communication in play in politics. This study investigates the ideological and pragmatic implications of ergative choices made in President Buhari's 2015 inaugural speech. The speech was purposively selected because the 2015 inaugural speech is a speech that marked transition from the ruling party to the opposition. Due to the nature and size of the data, content analysis under qualitative research design was adopted. Findings reveal that in the speech, the choice of Medium over Agent and the use of "middle" clauses, made agency not be accounted for in some instances. Also, the use of some descriptive words in the relational process such as terrifying force, mindless group, immediate concern, to describe Boko Haram while words such as eccentric and unorthodox used to describe the founder of Boko Haram suggests the communication of mixed messages. This paper concludes that linguistic choices made in political text are structured in such a way where the audience needs to pay attention

to fully understand the actual message being communicated. This is usually the case because the language used in political text is designed to convey a surface meaning as well as a deep meaning.

Keywords: "effective" clauses, range, 'middle" clauses, Medium, Agent, receptive voice.

Introduction

The relationship between language and politics has received a lot of scholarly attention and these cut across disciplines and empirical field. Scholars within the field of linguistics, political science and political communication have made numerous attempts to explain the interaction between politics and language. To corroborate this view, Charteris-Black (2005, p. 5) suggests that "within all types of political systems, from autocratic, through oligarchic to democratic; leaders have relied on spoken words to convince others of the benefits that arise from their leadership".

Studies have shown how language in politics can be used to change opinions, influence attitude, shape public thoughts and views. Van Dijk (1993) is of the opinion that political leaders are able to influence the mental models, knowledge, attitudes and even the ideologies of their recipients. Jones and Peccei (2004) for instance, observed that language can be used to create and reinforce certain value systems by shaping the beliefs which affect people's behaviours, motivations, desires and fears, and establish certain ideologies as common sense. Most times, politicians adopt speech patterns and apply linguistic structures and devices to increase the impact of their ideas on the audience. Given the nature of political process and system we will expect polarization in the ways they express their views. For example, political leaders can use language to give contrastive meaning to their audience through describing their party in more positive terms than the opposition party or even making their achievements explicit than implicit, and stated rather than presupposed. They also hide, or leave information that will give them a bad impression and their

opponents a good one. Political text aims to influence public knowledge, beliefs and actions as it relates to politics. One of the strategies used to achieve this preferred meaning especially in political discourse is through ergative choices.

This research uses M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1984) revised in 2004 and 2014 by Halliday and Matthiessen as its theoretical framework. The theory is termed systemic because it is believed that individuals have a wide range of linguistic choices available for them to use when making utterances and text. The theory is also termed functional because language performs a number of limitless functions in a variety of situations. The functions are divided into three and are called metafunctions. The metafunctions are ideational metafunction, textual metafunction and interpersonal metafunction. The ideational function consists of transitivity and voice and also embodies ergativity.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) suggests that any clause can be analyzed transitively or ergatively and to carry out any transitive analysis, the emphasis has to be the difference between the processes and the associated roles of participants while ergative analysis looks at the similarities between the processes and participant roles. Transitivity analysis focuses on whether the action was done by the 'doer' and if the action is affecting another participant. However, ergative analyses are not based on the notion of actor and goal but those of cause and effect. Halliday considers ergativity as an alternative perspective to transitivity for any clause in English which focuses on the presence or absence of agency and the reason for such presence or absence. Political discourse focuses on agency when trying to accept responsibility for a positive outcome or deny responsibility by extending it to an external actor. Therefore, ergativity is used in this research to investigate how the use or avoidance of agency can alter meaning in political speeches. This choice is brought about because it covers morphology, syntax

and semantics. Ergativity shows how choice of words and their presentations or arrangement in a sentence can alter meaning. It is also referred to as morphosyntactic alignment and shows the relationship between morphology (an ergative verb) and syntax (how the agency is positioned in the sentence).

Linguistics choices are motivated, that is, there is a reason for its usage. The use of ergative verbs gives room to choose whether to express agency or not to express agency and this choice can be used to conceal or give very little information on a particular subject matter. In other words, language user have the option of either stating action or events as happening by itself or caused to happen or just stating the action and implying an external participant.

Statement of the Problem

The 2015 inaugural speech is very important to Nigerians. This is because the address gave the people hope that change has come and a man of integrity is now in control. However, the address has received little attention in terms of research especially in the domain of functional linguistics even though it contains a lot of linguistic resources for analyses useful for language based research. As a result, people are yet to really understand if the message communicated has a deep and surface meaning.

Analysing this inaugural address will help language users to fully appreciate the message conveyed in the address. Also analysing the language in the speech in terms of ergativity under Systemic Functional Grammar will help to ascertain if the language was effectively used to convey the messages.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the ergative choices which include: the ergative participants, "effective"/ "middle" clauses and operative/ receptive voice made in president Buhari's 2015

inaugural speech and also examine the pragmatic implications of these choices.

Review of Related Literature: Systemic Functional Grammar

The main theoretical framework employed in this study is ergativity which is based on M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). It looks at how meaning is represented in a clause. It explains how speakers account for their perception of the outside world and how it affects mental models of reality in language. The theory is termed systemic because it postulates that individuals have a wide range of linguistic choices to choose when speaking and the context in which the utterances are made influences the choice of words used by the individual.

The process of using language is semiotic which refers to making meaning. The given language, context or register available to the speaker affects the choices that would be made. The theory is also termed functional because language carries out varieties of functions within a given situation. Language performs a number of functions which is tagged metafunctions. The first function of language is the ideational function which is the use of words and grammar to express human experiences. This function is further divided into two: experiential and logical function. The second function is the interpersonal metafunction which looks at the attitude of the speaker towards the listener. In other words, it looks at the relationship between the speaker and the listener. Lastly is the textual metafunction which has to do with the construction of the text. This particular metafunction is referred to as the facilitating or enabling function by Halliday because while the other metafunctions look at experiences and interpersonal relations, this metafunction looks at the organization and build up of the text and also considers the creation of cohesion and continuity in discourse.

Ideational Function

This metafunction is divided into experiential meaning and logical meaning. The experiential meaning talks about the experience of the speaker. The experiential meaning is divided into inner experience which is what the speaker experiences as is going on inside the mind and the outer experience which is the experience as going on in the world around us. The logical meaning shows how language structures these experiences. "The experiential meaning is achieved through transitivity which is a figure of happening, doing, sensing, saying, being or having" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

Transitivity looks at processes and how they are construed into manageable sets of process types. The types of processes are:

Process Types

1. **Material process (process of doing or happening)**

This process describes an action or event. It answers the question *what* happened? The participants in the material process are Actor the doer of the action, Goal the receiver of the action, Scope which typically occur in an intransitive clause is not affected by the action, Beneficiary the one that benefits from the action and the Attribute is usually found in intransitive clause describes the action as self-engendered.

2. **Relational Process (process of being and having)**

The relational process is the process that characterizes (Attributive relational clauses) and identifies (Identifying relational clauses) the participants. The participants for the Attributive relational process are Carrier and Attribute while the participants for the Identifying relational process are Identified/ Token and Identifier/ Value.

3. **Mental Process (process of sensing)**

The mental process is divide into four types which are: perception (seeing), cognition (thinking), desideration (wanting) and emotion (feeling). This process has two participants- Sener and Phenomenon.

4. Verbal Process (process of saying)

The participants in the verbal process are Sayer (the participant doing the speaking, asking, praising etc.), Receiver (the participant spoken to directly), Verbiage (what is said) and the Target (the participant that the saying is directed to usually praise, critic etc.)

5. Behavioural Process (process of behaving)

This process looks at the physiological and psychological behavior such as breathing, laughing, coughing etc. the participants are Behaver and behavior.

6. Existential Process(process of existing)

This process has only one participant the Existent and the process is introduced with the word "there".

Ergativity in Traditional Grammar

Ergativity is used to describe a grammatical pattern in which the subject of an intransitive clause is treated in the same way as the object of a transitive clause and differently from the transitive subject (Dixon 1994, P. 1). All languages have two types of clauses: intransitive clause which contains a verb plus one core argument such as *She cried, they danced,* and transitive clause that contains the verb and two arguments such as:

1. They killed the snake.
2. Peter hit the ball.

Based on this, noun phrases in a sentence can be classified as being one of these three grammatical relations: the sole argument of an intransitive verb or in other words the subject of an intransitive verb represented as **S**, the subject of a transitive verb represented as **A** and the Object of the transitive verb as **O**

S=subject of intransitive verb.

A= subject of the transitive verb or Agent of the transitive verb.

O= Object of transitive verb or Patient of the transitive verb.

In traditional grammar, there is no distinction between the subject of the transitive and intransitive verb. S was used to refer to both(S and A). This led most scholars especially those who dealt with

ergativity to come up with a more neutral term. Thus Dixon came up with the three-way distinction between A, S and O where A is the transitive subject, S the intransitive subject and O the transitive object. These relations are almost always marked differently in some ways either with the case marking in the noun phrase, agreement marking on the verb, word order or a combination of these. For instance, in English **A** is the first argument and **O** is the second argument. For a transitive verb with two arguments one is marked on **A** while the other is marked on **O**. An important question about these is how for a particular verb can one determine which argument is **A** and which argument is **O**. The answer has to do with the idea of controller over an action.

To know the argument that is marked on to the **A** and **O** roles, the prototypical usage of the verb have to be considered. In the prototypical usage, one argument will have control over the action while the other argument will be affected by the action. The argument that has control over the action is called the Agent and is assigned the **A** role while the argument that is affected by the action is called the Patient and is assigned the **O** role. For example the prototypical usage of the word 'slapped' would be: *Peter slapped Sarah*. The hitter 'Peter' is the controller of the action while 'Sarah' is affected by the action.

To really understand the concept of ergativity in traditional grammar, let us have more examples:

3. Peter slapped Sarah.
4. Peter walked.
5. Sarah laughed.

If we swap the nouns in the above examples and replace them with pronouns we will have:

6. He slapped her.
7. He walked.
8. She laughed.

Going back to our definition of Ergativity which is the subject of an intransitive clause being treated in the same way as the object of a transitive clause and differently from the transitive subject, we can see that the subject of the intransitive clause is treated the same way as the Agent of the transitive clause while our patient is being marked differently. What this means is that there are some groups of pronouns that primarily occupy the subject- Agent slot and some pronouns that occupies the Patients slot. For instance, 'He slapped her' is correct however, 'Her slapped he' is not grammatically correct.

In Linguistics, when the Subject and Agent are marked the same way, it is called Nominative case and a different marking for the patient is called Accusative. Therefore, it is referred to as the Nominative- Accusative Alignment. However, in a situation where the Subject and the Patient are treated alike and the Agent treated differently we have what is called the Ergative- Absolutive Alignment. The Subject and the Patient are marked the same way is the Absolutive case and the Agent is the Ergative case.

The term ergativity was initially used to refer to the case marking of the components of a noun phrase. The components of the noun phrase can either be Ergative-Absolutive case or Nominative-Accusative case. For the Ergative- Absolutive case, the subject of an intransitive clause is marked the same way as the object of a transitive clause and the transitive clause is marked differently while a Nominative- Accusative case is where the subject of the intransitive clause is marked the same as the subject of the transitive clause while the object of the transitive clause is marked differently. According to Dixon, (1994, P. 4)

The term ergativity has been extended to the marking of syntactic functions by particles and adpositions, by pronominal cross-referencing markers on the main or auxiliary verbs and by constituent order. It is also used to apply to co-referentiality

constraints on the formation of complex sentences through coordination and subordination: if these constraints treat intransitive subjects and transitive object in the same way the language is said to have 'ergative syntax' and if they treat intransitive subject and transitive subject in the same way, there is said to be 'accusative syntax'.

Ergativity in Systemic Functional Grammar

According to Halliday and Matthessien (2004), the system of transitivity comprises two complementary perspectives: the transitive model and the ergative model and one or the other may be foregrounded across different registers. Ergative model looks at cause and effect while the transitive mode focuses on the process types. Ergative pattern uses Process and Medium in the nucleus of a clause which is possibly extended to other participants such as Agent and Beneficiary. The Agent as suggested by Haliday and Matthiessen (2004), has mixed features of both participants and circumstance. An Agent in a clause can either come as a nominal group or in a prepositional phrase headed by *by*. The presence of the preposition *by* is determined by the textual or interpersonal function of the clause. Systemic Functional Grammar tries to explain how the participants (the Medium through which the process is enacted) in an intransitive clause becomes the Goal in a transitive clause.

As Halliday and Matthessien (2004) have argued, the system of transitivity comprises two complementary perspectives: the transitive model and the ergative model and one or the other may be fore-grounded across different registers. The transitivity process looks at how the participants interact with other participants and the process involved. Ergativity however, focuses on cause and effect. In all process types, there is always a participant that is most closely associated with the process and that participant is called the Medium because it is through this participant that the process is manifested. An ergative structure can either be

Medium+ Process or Agent+ Process+ Medium. The first structure type implies that there is an external agent like in the example *the cup broke.* But this agent remains implicit, not explicitly stated because language users most often hide agency except when the context favours the mention. The second structure type shows the Agent that carried out the action: *I broke the cup* with 'I' being the Agent that is, the Participant that broke the cup.

Ergativity is examined from the perspective of ideational metafunction at the stratum of the lexicogrammar. Both the transitive and ergative perspectives are deployed in conjunction with the system of voice. In transitivity, actions are typically construed in material process and the participants are Actor (doer), Goal (the receiver of the action), scope (the indirect object) and the beneficiary (the one that benefits from the action). From an ergative perspective, there are four types of participants: Agent, Medium, Beneficiary and Range. The Agent is the instigator of the action, the Medium is the participant that is connected to the process, The Beneficiary is the participant that benefits from the process and the Range is similar to scope in transitivity. In clauses where there are both Actors and Goals, Agent maps unto Actor: *I broke the pot*. However, where there is a Scope instead of a Goal, Medium maps unto Actor: *he jumped the fence*. For intransitive clauses with the Actor as the only participant, there is no Agency and Medium again maps onto Actor: *he ran fast*. A breakdown of the participant roles in the ergative model and their transitive equivalents are:

Medium

Medium helps in the actualistion of the process. In material process Medium has the equivalent of Actor for middle intransitive clause and Goal for effective transitive. In Mental process, Medium is Senser. For relational clauses, Medium is Carrier in relational attributive and Token in relational identifying. Medium is Sayer for verbal process, Medium is Behaver in the Behavioural process and Existent in the existential process.

Agent

Agent is the external participant that actualizes the process. In the material process Agent is Actor when there is a Goal or Initiator when the word *make* is used. Agent is Phenomenon in mental process especially the *please*- type. For relational process, Agent is Attributor for attributive relational process (Attributor is initiator) and Assigner in Identifying clauses where Token is the subject. Agent is Sayer in verbal process. No agentive participant in Behavioural and Existential process.

Beneficiary

In the material clauses Beneficiary is Recipient or Client, Receiver for verbal process and in attributive relational process has few cases of Beneficiary.

Range

In the material process, Range is Scope while Range is Phenomenon in mental process especially in the *like*- type. Range is Verbiage in verbal process, Range is Attribute for attributive relational process and for identifying relational process Range is Value. In Behavioural clauses, Range is Behaviour.

Ergativity and Voice -Effective and Middle Clause

Voice in systemic functional grammar is divided into two: operative and receptive. Operative is the same as the active voice where the Agent is the subject of the clause whereas the receptive voice just like the passive voice has the Medium in the subject position. The effective clause can either be active (Operative) or passive (receptive). In the active voice the Actor/Agent takes the theme position therefore, the structure of the active clause begins with the Doer then moves to what they did and then who they did it to (Actor/Agent- Process-Goal). An effective clause can also be passive with the Doer at the end of the clause or completely omitted.

9. I broke the cup.
10. The cup was broken by me.
11. The cup was broken.

The first example is an active clause while the second example is a passive clause where the Doer is not fore-grounded at the front of the clause in theme position. Therefore, the clause can be said to place focus on the Medium thereby placing less responsibility on the Doer. The third example is an Agentless-passive and captures a lesser responsibility on the Doer because the Doer is omitted. The focus in the third example is not in who did the action rather the Doer is implied by the clause structure.

The middle clause construes events with less or no responsibility being able to be attributed to the Doer because it has no feature of agency. For the middle clause, events are portrayed as if they just happened by themselves.

12. Joe boils the water.
13. The water was boiled by Joe.
14. The water was boiled.
15. The water boils.

A clause with only one participant *the pot broke* is called a middle clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Davidse (1992) names this type of clause ergative middle clause. These types of clause are non- ergative Actor- Process that do not extend to a Goal. An example of such clause is *the water boils, the girl was revived*. Events are portrayed as something that just happened using the middle clause. However, a clause that shows how participants in an event interact is called the effective clause. These clauses have Actor/Agent and Goal/ Medium.

Table 1: Illustrations of an effective clause

Transitivity	I	Broke	the pot
	Actor	Process	Goal
Ergativity	I	Broke	the pot
	Agent	Process	Medium

Political Discourse

Political discourse "is the talk or text of politicians and political institutions such as presidents, prime ministers, political parties or other government parasatals at local, national or international levels" (Van Dijk, 1997, P. 1). There are parties involved in political speeches; the speaker, usually the politician and the listeners usually the citizens. According to Van Dijk (2006, P. 4) " at least two ideologies are expressed in political discourse: (a) professional ideologies that underlines the function as politician, (b) the sociopolitical ideologies they adhere to as members of political parties and social groups".

Political speech reflects not just the ideologies of the speaker but also those of their groups, political parties, affiliations, government or nation and can be analysed at different level of language: phonetic/ phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics etc. Political discourse is a political phenomenon and just as studies on politics are of interest to political scientists, studying the discursive events with political situations has also captured the attention of linguist. According to Fairclough's (1989), he reinforced the fact that language use in everyday context (discourse) has the power to construct reality and make people see certain things in certain ways. The relationship that exists between language and power in every society and the fact that power, language and politics are intertwine brings about the relevance in studying language use in political discourse.

An inaugural speech is usually given during the inaugural ceremony of a newly elected or appointed government. An inaugural speech is highly important because it is used by the speaker to establish their aims, goals, priorities, visions, missions and aspirations while in offices. It can also be used to inspire and give the audience a sense of hope and believe that a change or continuity should be expected. "Inaugural speech is cited as a preserved portion of historical record, one in which every president

understands that his/her word will echo as a reflection of themselves throughout their presidency and beyond (Whissell and Sigelman, cited in Velez, 2022, p. 6).Due to the importance of the inaugural speech, it is imperative to examine the language use so as to understand what the president represents

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The speech under study was obtained from http://nigeriaunmission.org/president-muhhammadu-buharis-inaugural-speech/. On 19 February, 2023. To conduct this analysis using transitivity system of Systemic Functional Grammar, at first all the ranking clauses, which are the basis of the process types are identified. The identification of the ergative choices were done by isolating the process types and categorising them into six groups. The ergative choices were interpreted to get their pragmatic implications. The speech is broken in clauses. Only the main clauses are analysed because in SFG, clause is the primary unit of analysis and the main clause is complete due to their functional components.

To identify the ergative choices made in the speech, firstly, the study analyses the process types and the ergative participant in the process type. Also identify the "middle clauses" and "effective clauses" used in the speech.

Discussion and Results.

Results of the analysis are explained first by identifying the ergative choices which includes the process, ergative participants, "effective" and "middle" clauses and operative and receptive voice made in the address, followed by the analysis of the pragmatic implications encoded in the ergative choices made in the speech. The table below illustrates the ergative choices used in the address.

Table 2 Ergative Participants, Operative/ Receptive Voice and Effective/ Middle Clauses in President Buhari's Speech.

Process Types	Frequency	Ergative Participants	Frequency	"Middle Clauses" and "Effective Clauses"	Frequency	Operative/ Receptive voice	Frequency
Material process	63	Agent	52	"Middle clauses"	4	Operational	56
		Medium	25	"Effective Clauses"	59	Receptive	7
		Range	33				
		Beneficiary	1				
Relational Process	24	Medium	24	"Middle clauses"	0	Operational	22
		Range	24	"Effective Clauses"	24	Receptive	2
Mental Process	14	Medium	13	"Middle clauses"	0	Operational	13
		Range	12	"Effective Clauses"	14	Receptive	1
Verbal Process	11	Medium	10	"Middle clauses"	0	Operational	11
		Range	1	"Effective Clauses"	11	Receptive	0
		Beneficiary	10		0		
Behaivoural Process	0	Medium	0	"Middle clauses"	0	Operational	0
		Range	0	"Effective Clauses"	0	Receptive	0
Existential Process	2	Medium	2	"Middle clauses"	0	Operational	1
				"Effective Clauses"	2	Receptive	0
Total	114		194		114		114

i. Material Process

The ergative choices made in the material process in President Buhari's speech, the predominant structure are Agent-Proc.-Range-place because most of the clauses have an Agent. However six clauses began with Medium instead of Agent and three clauses began with the Material process like clauses. The high occurrence of Agent in the speech is used by the speaker to encourage action and decision making as seen in clauses. As seen in the excerpt

46. The law enforcing authorities will be charged to operate within the constitution.

ii. Relational Process

From the table above, Medium is seen in all the cases of the relational clauses. The structure seen in the ergative equivalent of the speech is Medium-Process-Range. President Buhari uses attributive relational process to describe the security state of the country with focus on insurgency. He uses words like insurgent,

terrifying force, mindless and godless group to describe and characterize Boko Haram. This can be seen in clause below 82. Boko Haram is a mindless, godless group who are far away from Islam as one can think of.

iii. Mental Process

The structure of the ergative equivalent of the mental process in president Buhar's speech is made up of Medium-Process-Range except clauses three clauses. In the speech, mental process is used to give the international community the assurance that President Buhari will be a support system whenever he is needed. President Buhari also used the mental process to influence decision making and policy and this can be seen in clauses

> 28. I also wish to assure the wider international community of our readiness to cooperate and help to combat threats of cross- border terrorism, sea piracy, financial crimes, cyber crime, climate change, the spread of communicable diseases and other challenges of the 21st century.
>
> 47. The federal executive under my watch will not seek to encroach on the duties and functions of the legislative and judicial arms of government.

iv. Verbal Process

For the verbal process, the main structure is Medium-Process-Beneficiary except two clauses with structures Medium-Process-Range and Process-Beneficiary respectively. The speaker tries to control the narrative through giving selective information in the speech. All the clauses in the verbal process have Beneficiary with nothing being said (Range) except one clause.

> 22. A few people have privately voiced fears that on coming back to office I shall go after them.

v. Existential Process

In President Buhari's speech, existential process is used to deny the existence of any personal vendetta by the speaker and it is also used to assert the existence of the national consensus of democracy as the chose political path for the country.

> 24. There will be no paying off of scores.

vi. "Effective" and "Middle" Clauses

There are four (4) "Middle" clauses in President Buhari's speech and the seven "Middle" clauses are found in the material process. The use of these ergative clauses means that there were instances in the speech when agency is unaccounted for.

> **46.** The law enforcing authorities will be charged to operate within the constitution.
>
> **84.** For now the armed forces will be fully charged with prosecuting the fight against Boko Haram.

vii. Operative/ Receptive Voice

As seen in table 2 above, a total of ten receptive voice choices are found in President Buhari;s speech. Two (2) are found in the relational process, seven (7) in material process and one (1) in the mental process.

> **73.** Progress has been made in recent weeks by our security forces.
>
> 74. But victory cannot be achieved by basing the command and control center in Abuja.

viii. Pragmatic Implications of the Ergative Choices used in the Speech

Participants in the material process appear more since material process is the predominant process in the speech. The table shows the choice of Agent in the inaugural speech.

Table 3 Occurrence of the Agents in President Buhari's Speech

Type of Actor	**Occurrences**
I / my	16
They	2
We / us/our	22
Nigerians/ Nigeria/the country/ Nation	8
My administration/ the government	4
Organisation/ the three tiers of government	3
Others (demonstratives and other non- human actors)	11
Book haram	1
Total	**63**

From the table above, the Agent that appears to be used the most is 'we*' and* 'I' with a frequency of 17 and 16 respectively. 'We' is used in political discourse to downplay individual role. This pronoun helps the speaker to not only give the listeners a feeling of inclusiveness but also to reduce the speaker's personal responsibility. President Buhari uses 'we' in his speech to refer to both Nigerians and members of his government as seen in the excerpt:

70. We have to look at the whole field of medicare.

Another pragmatic implication found in President Buhari's speech is the choice of Agent 'I'. This pronoun enables the speaker to present a positive picture of himself. These pronominal choices are strategically used to affect the understanding of the message. 'I' in these excerpts below portrays President Buhari as an amiable person, discipline and with no personal ties to anyone.

20. I belong to everybody.

21. I belong to nobody.

Another pragmatic implication is derived from the use of receptive voices in PBS. By using receptive voice, the speaker is putting Agent at the complement position. What this means is, even though there is an Agent, the listener has to look for Agent in the speech. In other words, Medium takes the Subject slot while Agent takes the slot. This is aimed at shifting focus from the Agent to either the process or the Medium. The excerpts below illustrate further:

12. I hope this act of graciously accepting defeat by the outgoing president will become the standard of political conduct in the country.

73. Progress has been made in recent weeks by our security forces.

The above excerpts show how President Buhari shifts focus from the Agent to the Medium. The Agents 'the outgoing President' and 'our security forces' are back-grounded thereby giving prominence to the Medium.

Again, the predominant use of material process helps president Buhari to communicate his actions, policies and decisions. By

using doing verbs such as fix, build, tackle, charged, rebuild and reform, he builds the confidence of the people through emphasizing his act and influence.

31. We are going to tackle them head on.

34. We can fix our problems.

45. To achieve our objectives we must consciously work the democracy system.

Lastly, when using middle clauses, Agent is completely omitted thereby giving room for Agency to be implied. This is another pragmatic implication of using middle clauses in PBS. When Agency is omitted, the message passed is incomplete and the question 'by whom' comes to play. The excerpts below both have one thing in common the question 'by whom?'

46. The law enforcing authorities will be charged to operate within the constitution.

55. Elsewhere relations between Abuja and the states have to be clarified if we are to serve the country better.

Conclusion

This study through the analysis of data has shown that the ergative variant of the participant role with the highest frequency in President Buhari's inaugural speech is Medium77. In the speech, the ergative participants with the highest occurring structure are Medium-Proc.-Range-place. Thirteen clauses have Agent omitted. Three of those clauses have focus on the process while the remaining ten clauses have focus on Medium. For relational process in president Buhari's address, Medium is accounted for in all the clauses. Clauses in the mental process in the address have Medium accounted for except one where focus is on the process. Only one clause has Range in the verbal process and for the existential process, Medium is accounted for in both occurrences. There are four (4) middle clauses in President Buhari's inaugural address and one hundred and ten (110) effective clauses. None of the middle clauses are agent- less. In the 2015 President Buhari's

inaugural speech, there are one hundred and four (104) operative constructions and ten (10) receptive constructions.

In President Buhari's speech, the relationship between the linguistic choices and the way these linguistic choices are arranged or placed in the speech suggests that specific strategies are employed to obscure, hide agency and communicate mixed messages to the audience. For example, the use of some descriptive words such as mindless, godless, immediate concern, insurgent etc show the urgency required in tackling insecurity. However the use of certain words such as eccentric and unorthodox to describe the founder of Boko haram insurgency also suggest an attempt to downplay the seriousness of his crimes. President Buhari used the relational process to communicate mixed messages to the audience.

In the speech, agency is omitted a couple of times so as to avoid accountability. The use of intransitive clauses and "middle" clauses are done to strategically shift focus and avoid taking responsibility. Also the use of receptive voice also suggests how the back-grounding of agency can alter the message being communicated. These linguistic choices and their constructions in the speech are pragmatically and ideologically motivated to communicate a deep and a surface meaning to the audience.

In conclusion, this study arrives at the assertion that linguistic choices in political text are made to convey hidden meanings to the audience. These meanings are not stated clearly or explicitly but can only be figured out through analysing the linguistic choices made by the speakers. Using ergativity to analysis the speech has helped to uncover how political speakers interact with the audience in the speeches and also explore the relationship between words and meanings.

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