

## A CRITICAL METAPHORICAL ANALYSIS OF VERBAL VIOLENCE IN SELECTED TIV POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SONGS

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### Abstract

Instrumental to political campaigns and vote canvassing are songs, particularly composed as a medium for expressing conflict, rallying support, and shaping public opinion. Within the domain of political discourse, whether linguistic or non-linguistic, metaphors and verbal abuse are often prevalent, serving as tools to persuade, incite, or denounce. This linguistic study, therefore, is a critical metaphorical analysis of Tiv political songs (TPS), with the aim of examining the intricate relationship between metaphors, verbal abuse, and political songs; and establishing their historical context, linguistic strategies, and social impact. Through an inclusive analysis, using Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis as the framework, and a qualitative design, this paper reveals the nuanced subtleties of metaphors and verbal abuse in TPS, their implications for democracy, and avenues for future research. Songs are purposively selected from two prominent artists and analysed based on their thematic preoccupations, metaphorical inclinations, and obnoxious predispositions. Active metaphors artists use to incite conflict, eulogise and garner support are identified. The study concludes that as a traditional component of culture, artists utilise metaphorical language and poetic licence within the genre to propagate verbal violence.

**Keywords:** Metaphors, Verbal violence, Tiv political songs, Campaign, Electorate

### Introduction

For some time now, political songs have been exploited as a potent medium for conveying messages of social change and advocacy. Due to their rich history in engaging audiences, political songs serve as vehicles for promoting awareness, inspiring political action, and mobilising support. They are a medium for catalysing social and political change initiatives. Finnegan (2012) posits that "political songs generally function to exert pressure on others (be it equals or superiors)" (p.72). The songs uphold and suggest certain values or interests, and are also used as a means of psychological release of repressed enmities and tension" (Gena & Ottoh-Agede, 2022). From the linguistic, sociological, and cultural perspectives, political songs are viewed as the tool for expressing dissent, shaping public discourse, and vehicle for verbal abuse. In most traditional societies, especially African, abuses are viewed as

part of the people's cultural craft and engagement and do not violate any traditional principle or norm. However, in modern societies, people are becoming more conscious of the use of language, and how it affects their self-esteem.

Abuse, generally, means to put down, and most times it involves name-calling and other derisive behaviours. It has different types. In this study, the focus is on verbal abuse (VA) which is an emotional or psychological abuse that happens when someone uses words to demean, assault, batter, ridicule, and manipulate another's feelings or emotion. VA which has a negative psychological impact is aimed at controlling how others feel as well as how power dynamics are controlled and maintained. Verbal abuse can sometimes lead to physical abuse; though not all verbal abuses are forceful, some are subtle. In this study, verbal abuse, in political songs, situated within political discourse, is expressed using the

rhetorical device referred to as metaphor.

A metaphor whose meanings are diverse could be the use of words to convey a representative meaning (Ottoh-Agede, 2020). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) view it as both a figure of speech and a linguistic expression capable of reconstructing the way readers feel about a textual universe. According to Mey (2001), a metaphor is a transfer of meaning from one word to another; a process of deriving meanings that are not originally inherent in a word or object of reference. The occurrence of a metaphor in a text indicates a change in how a word is used, that is if there is a change from the common sense of the word which is understood through the dictionary meaning attached to it (Ottoh-Agede, 2022).

For Lakoff (1997, p.1), "in classical theories of language, metaphors are considered as a matter of language and not thought. Metaphorical expressions were assumed to be mutually exclusive within the realm of ordinary language; everyday language had no metaphor and metaphor used mechanisms outside the realm of everyday conversational language". The classical theory took so much for granted viewing metaphors as mere figurative or poetic linguistic expressions. However, contemporary scholars (Lakoff, 1997; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Ottoh-Agede, 2020, & 2022) have explained how metaphors appear in everyday conversations as people interact, and therefore they become conceptual, conventional, and a part of an ordinary system of thought. Metaphors are a major and indispensable part of the everyday or ordinary traditional way of conceptualising the world, and everyday behaviour reflects a metaphorical understanding of experience (Lakoff, 1997).

As a tool in political campaigns and vote canvassing, political songs wield a lot of rhetorical effect and value through the use of metaphorical language. In Tiv land, political songs serve as campaign medium to express dissent and propagate abuse, as well as rally support for candidates. This study, being a critical analysis of metaphors, identifies the nuanced dynamics of metaphors and verbal abuse in Tiv political songs (TPS), and their implications for democracy and social impact. Tiv political campaign songs

(TPCS) are explored in this study to identify and analyse how artists harness metaphorical language to convey messages of environmental stewardship, socio-political justice, and equity.

### **Empirical Reviews**

Diverse scholars, with linguistic and non-linguistic orientations, have examined different angles of political discourse. Among these scholars are Kombol, Alan, and Ogi (2017), who investigate the influence of Mfater Kaha's political song (Idyu ka Inya I Teen Ga, which translates to, House of Representatives seat is not land grabbing and sales) on the electorate in the 2015 Makurdi/Guma Federal Constituency election. Their study demonstrates that the content of the song, which is basically to incite hate, influences the way the electorate views a particular candidate, described in the song as a land grabber. The focus of their study is on the content of the selected songs, while this present study focuses on the implication of inherent linguistic constructs of metaphors in the understanding of politics, power, and social change. Although the investigation of the content of songs in their study may have revealed some aspects of verbal abuse as in the case with name-calling, the adoption of critical metaphor analysis in this study makes it different from theirs.

Abdullahi and Amodu (2018) interrogate the ideologies and power relations in APC's manifesto. Although their work is not on political songs, it is relevant to this study since it is in the domain of political communication. Their research, which employs approaches such as critical discourse analysis and critical language study, reveals that there is a dialectal connection between a particular discursive act and what frames it; be it situational, institutional, or social structures. The study concludes that politics, power, and language share a common ground. The text considered in their study, though political, is a manifesto; this marks the departure from this current study which derives data from songs and is focused on how artists utilise metaphorical language to establish credibility, evoke empathy, appeal to reason, and promote or foster a sense of solidarity for socio-political change.

Also, Ugechi and Damkor (2019) examine

hate speech in selected Tiv political campaign songs in Benue State. They selected and analysed excerpts from four Tiv political artists between 2011 and 2018 using Austin's speech act theory. Their findings reveal that Tiv political campaign songs of that period were seditious of conflict and full of hate speech. As close as their study is to this current research, its concern is on hate speech which could trigger verbal abuse, or the other way round. Their theoretical set, however, demonstrates a clear leave-taking from this current research. This makes this work different though relevant for review. Gena and Ottoh-Agede (2022) explore the Tiv political cosmos using Leech's grand strategy theory of politeness to analyse selected songs. The study reveals some form of impoliteness among different artists which is symbolic of Tiv's political worldview. The study, though, shares the same data set, differs in its theoretical perspective from this present study.

#### **Method of Data Collection and Analysis**

The descriptive method is deployed to examine and analyse collected data which depict the dual nature of metaphor as a rhetorical strategy and a potential tool for verbal abuse. This is intended to establish its relationship with verbal abuse and social malady. The selected data which indicate expressions of complex dynamics and discursive categories provide the import in the exploration of theories on the relationship between language, power, and aggression. The data for this research is derived, primarily, from recorded Tiv political songs, obtained from campaign offices of political office holders, vendors of such songs, and individuals. The songs are known for their controversial content. The analysis is based on metaphorical expressions that perpetuate stereotypes and incite hostility. Three songs are purposively selected from two random artists: Bemdoo Kaki's "Certificate Forgery" (2015) and Mfater Kaha's (also known as El Stuffy) "Dickson Tarkighir" (2015), and "Yes Father" (2023) are examined. The random selection is based on their rhetorical patterns in the use of metaphors to abuse, evoke empathy, appeal to reason, and promote or foster a sense of solidarity for socio-political change. The songs are composed in Tiv, tape-recorded, and not written. Resulting from

this, the songs pass through two stages: transcription in Tiv and translation in English. The transcription and translation are done by one of the researchers who is bilingual in Tiv and English languages; and validated by another Tiv- English speaker who is a scholar of English studies in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Federal University of Lafia. The songs are presented and analysed thematically, and how metaphors construct and reinforce negative representations of political opponents and the ideological underpinnings of such constructs.

#### **Historical Context of Political Songs**

World leaders have utilised the potency of political songs in campaigns. For example, James Madison's campaign song, "Huzzah for Madison", Roosevelt's "Happy Days Are Here Again", William Howard Taft's "Get on a Raft with Taft" and Barrack Obama's "Signed, Sealed, Delivered, I'm Yours" (Gena & Ottoh-Agede, 2022) were all instrumental to communicating political meanings and ideologies of the candidates. In Nigeria, some of the popular musicians and their songs are causative of public discourse, symbolic of ideological messages and even lampooning. This is because the music is somewhat entwined with public life.

For instance, in the 1970s, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the Afrobeat musician, was one of the earliest to bring political themes into popular music. His song, "Zombie" (1976) was a lampoon of the Nigerian government and the Nigerian military for whom he claims responded to orders robotically. Later on, in the 1980s to date, others such as Majek Fashek's "Police Brutality" in Prisoner of Conscience (1989), Eedris Abdulkareem's "Jaga Jaga" (2004), African China's "Mr. President" (2006), Timaya's "Dem Mama" (2007) Asa's "Fire on the Mountain" (2007), Ras Kimono's "What's Gwan" (2007) and "Under Pressure" (2010), Sound Sultan's "2010" (2010), Falz's "This is Nigeria" (2018), Davido's "FEM" (2020), and Burna Boy's "20.10.20" (2020) have lent their voices in reggae, hip hop, and other genres to satirise the activities of politicians. Although, the songs carry political undertones, they are not campaign tools. On the other hand, the emphasis of this current study is on

songs composed specifically for political campaigns, not general social critique. Therefore, the study is, particularly, focused on paid-composed songs used for campaigns during elections among the Tiv of Benue State. This is intended to underscore the socio-political context shaping the metaphorical use of language and verbal abuse in the songs. In Tiv land, the use of political songs has its roots in the Second Republic when Kor Shirsha composed political campaign songs for the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) (Nyitse, 2006, p.80, as cited in Gena & Ottoh-Agede, 2022). Today, there is hardly any election without a new political song to accompany it, and this is one of the motivations for this research.

### **The Tiv of Benue State: Origin and Location**

The Tiv people are predominantly found in Benue State. Although the people are spread across Nigeria in different States such as Nasarawa, Taraba, and Plateau, they are significantly located in Benue State which seems to be the traditional seat of the Tiv nation. Benue State is one of the thirty-six (36) States in Nigeria. It is inhabited largely by the Tiv, Idoma, Igede, and the Etulo people. Adejoh (2005, p.56) avers that the origin of what is today called Benue State is traceable to the activities of the British colonial administration in Nigeria that carved out Benue Province in 1926. Adejoh posits that as of 1946, Benue Province was made up of the Tiv, Idoma, Wukari, Nasarawa, and Lafia divisions (Adejoh 2005, p.56 as cited in Gena & Ottoh-Agede, 2022, p.157). The Tiv are politically and culturally active people and they view both politics and culture as syncretistic. For the Tiv, politics and culture are intertwined, influencing political decision-making.

In line with the above, Eleazu (1988) posits that the Tiv have one of the most unique cultures in Nigeria as typified by their music, dance, food, and marriage traditions, among other things. This richness in their culture translates into other activities like dance, masquerades, and songs, among others. In Eleazu's view, Tiv cultural patterns are aesthetically distinct; adding embellishment to their ways of life, and politics as part. The Tiv are generally agrarian, specialising in farming, hunting, and such agricultural-related

practices as the breeding of goats, chickens, pigs, guinea fowls, and others (Dzurgba, 2012, p.32 as cited in Gena & Ottoh-Agede, 2022, p. 159). They have over time engaged in politics as soon as Nigeria got her independence in 1960. Since then, songs as part of their culture have been brought into their politics too.

### **Theoretic Position**

Critical metaphor analysis (CMA) developed by Jonathan Charteris-Black is an approach to metaphor analysis aimed at revealing the usually unconsciously hidden or covert intentions of language users (Charteris-Black, 2004, p.34). Its concerns are implicit meaning, ideological configurations, and hidden power relations within socio-political and cultural contexts (Ottoh-Agede, 2020, p.28). CMA is an approach for analysing the unexpressed or hidden meanings and ideologies of language users. This is necessary because when human beings communicate, they do not say all that needs to be stated at a time. Certain meanings are, therefore, consciously or unconsciously left to be filled by the listeners. Thus, CMA is one of the tools used in deriving implied meanings of texts. It is equally used to unravel the kind of ideology(ies) that language users put forth in (a) particular text(s) and for conceptual mapping. In this study, therefore, the theory is adopted in critical metaphor analysis and its application in selected Tiv political songs. It is also used to identify the implications of metaphorical language in conveying ideological messages.

Metaphor theory evolved in linguistics in classical language studies; though the study has over time developed in the works of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff and Turner (1989), Lakoff (1997), Smith and Hofler (2015), Ottoh-Agede (2020), Ottoh-Agede (2022), among others. As a matter of everyday conversations, metaphors are mapped in two different ways: the source domain and the target domain. The source domain means the common and basic sense that is the literal meaning of a word, while the target domain is the new metaphorical sense or innovative meaning that is attached to a word. Thus, in the analysis, metaphors are identified and discussed under the subheadings of the target domain.

## Findings and Discussion

### Metaphorical Experimentation and Verbal Abuse in TPS

Tiv political songs, like other Nigerian musical arts, are loaded with metaphorical language often drawing from cultural and natural imagery such as describing opponents as pests, animals, natural disasters, among others. Thus, dehumanising these opponents and justifying hostility. This is a result of the cultural nature of the Tiv society, where proverbs, gibes, witticisms, and wisecracks are commonly used among the people. Diverse metaphors which embed, offensive name-calling and culture apprising are identified in the songs and these metaphors not only reflect but also shape public perceptions and attitude towards political figures; influencing the Tiv political climate. The following metaphors are identified and discussed.

#### *Metaphors of Dissention/Conflict and Verbal*

#### *Abuse*

The deployment of conflict metaphors in the songs is stylistic and all-pervading. Conflict metaphors or dissent metaphors in political discourse, generally, often highlight personal and sometimes physical disagreement and skirmishes centred on a special interest. Public perception, political polarisation, and social disorder are also salient contributory factors. Conflict metaphors in the songs are deployed for social and political advocacy or against social phenomena that have negative inclinations such as poverty, injustice, perfidy, corruption, etc. By and large, the use of conflict metaphors in the songs depicts politics as a kind of war where one candidate employs the services of an artist to demean his opponent to gain acceptance from the electorate. In the excerpt 1, from the song that follows, the rhetorical strategy of name-calling is prevalent and this is bound to cause conflict or some form of social malaise.

#### Excerpt 1:

##### Tiv Version

*Oryuwhee ornima ngu nyi?*  
*Tema nya shie wou u ya kaa*  
*Ezwatswen...*  
*Hegen kwagh kuman ga*  
*Lanem yo Pius Uleva*  
*Ka or u a lu yan zan ave*  
*Shi sonon u ke ityev*  
*U a lu a via ga*  
*Ka nyi or la*  
*Ezwatswen u Tiv za va*  
*Kwagh u ya na wanigban*  
*Kela ngu ga*

##### English Transcription

*What worth is the envious umbrella man?*  
*Sit down you've had your share*  
*Selfish man...*  
*Nothing is enough for you*  
*It's unclear to me Pius Uleva*  
*It's one who's currently eating*  
*That's asking for that (food) on the farm*  
*That's not yet cooked*  
*What kind of a man is that?*  
*The lone-mouthed of Tivland has come*  
*Now eat and give your brother*  
*No longer exists*

(Adapted from Mfater Kaha's "Dickson Tarkighir", 2015)

Mfater Kaha's song is composed specifically to garner support for, and to patronise the candidacy of Honourable Dickson Tarkighir of the All Progressives' Congress (APC) in the 2015 Makurdi/Guma Federal Constituency election; while discrediting the other opponent (Hon JT, name abbreviation researchers') who is the candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In excerpt 1, the artist describes JT as an "envious umbrella man", a "selfish man", and "the lone-mouthed of Tiv" who has come to tamper with the

status quo of the Tiv culture of sharing and turn-taking; a norm in Tiv socio-political context that insists that when one takes a turn to "eat", others should be allowed to also "eat". To "eat" here is a metaphor for the gains and benefits of holding a political position following the Tiv political philosophy: "The lone-mouthed of Tiv has come, now eat and give your brother no longer exists" (Excerpt 1, lines 10-12). The Tiv people hold a cultural view that when one takes a turn to hold an elective position, s/he should allow others who



have not held any position to do so. For them, political leadership is not a birthright, and it comes not only with responsibilities but also with financial remunerations. Thus, it is inferred from this worldview that the Tiv value turn-taking or what this study terms the sharing culture as in the case with the artist's exposé of "now eat and give your brother no longer exits" (Excerpt 1, line 12). In the preceding lines of the song, the artist alleges that the Tiv turn-taking structure favours his principal; since the other candidate (JT) has held a position almost repeatedly in government, it is only fair for him to pave the way for another person. This reveals some idiosyncrasies that, the political structure in Tiv does not recognise competence as an ideal for leadership. They rather believe that when one occupies a political position, s/he should do so minding others who need to share in the munificence of governance, in their perspective. It is based on this premise that the artist refers to the opponent as a "selfish man" (line 3) for whom "nothing seems to be enough" (line 4). This justifies the use of the metaphor, "the lone-mouthed" (line 11). The opponent here is occupying a political office at that time, as a Commissioner of Lands under the PDP government of Governor GS (original name withheld, researchers' abbreviation), and for insatiability of power, he vies for the House of Representative position. Kaha, the artist, uses food as a metaphor for political position. This is why the politicians are seen to be "eating cooked food" as in lines 5-8 below:

It's unclear to me Pius Uleva.  
It's one who's currently eating.  
That's asking for that (food) on the farm  
That's not yet cooked (**Excerpt 1**)

It is only those who think political positions are

meant to enrich their holders that can describe it using such metaphors as eating, food, and cooking. These connote the underlying mentality of Tiv's political belief system and culture. The mindset here is personal aggrandisement and enrichment.

In a similar vein, Bemdoo Kaki sets out to politically polarise the electorate, as well as cause social malaise in his use of metaphors in the song, "Certificate Forgery". The song, which was composed to discountenance GS's second term bid, was targeted at character-assassinating his personality, rather than assessing his performance and impact in the first term (2007-2011). GS, the then Governor of Benue State (2007-2011), served for the first four years, and as is the manner of most governors in Nigeria, wanted a second term (2011-2015); at the time, he faced the allegation of forging a certificate to secure his place as governor of the State.

The artist, Kaki, admits in the song that they were privy to the forgery as they (the artist inclusive) were part of the conspiracy that brought him (GS) to power in the first place. Deducing from this statement, it is clear that falling out of favour with GS makes the artist switch camps to the highest bidder. These artists are usually controlled by those who pay the highest. Their motives are political and economic at the same time; and less ideological. Based on this, the artists often utilise cultural immunity and poetic licence to vilify and malign opponents of their sponsors so easily. This echoes the popular axiom "he who pays the piper dictates the tune". In excerpt 2 that follows, there are allegations of duplicity and dishonesty levied against Governor GS. These can cause conflict between those who support the candidacy of GS and the artist's clique:

## Excerpt 2:

Tiv Version

*U too ikyaren i fer  
U ya ishor  
Kpa kumau ga  
Shi u mough nan  
Tar u Benue ican...*

English Transcription

*You used a forged certificate  
To win the election  
Yet you are not contented  
You are still bringing hardship  
On Benue State...*

### Chorus

*Ungwa ase imya la  
Mba lu eren tom u gomenti zende angahar  
Mba tativ mba hendan  
U Camli a u Honda  
Zenden ken geli...*

*Hear that kind of a thing  
Government workers are trekking  
Those murderers are driving  
In Camrys and Hondas  
Going about the town...*

(Adapted from Bemdoo Kaki's 2011)

From the opening lines (1- 5), Kaki levies a strong allegation of certificate forgery against GS and tells him that it is not enough to forge a certificate to gain power, he also brought untold hardship to the people of Benue State, especially the civil servants who are found going on foot for lack of money to pay their transportation fare, while the young boys GS uses for his dirty jobs of killing people are seen driving good cars: Camry and Honda (lines 6-7). This alludes to the biblical saying, "I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth (Ecclesiastes 10:7). The servants in the scriptural verse will be those used by the governor to murder people; these murderers are seen driving about town in good cars while the princes, in this case, represented as the civil servants (workers) walk as nobodies. These expressions are capable of causing unhealthy working relationships between workers' unions and the government as well as conflict which could result in public volatility. There are various examples of verbal abuse in the songs depicted in the name-calling metaphors as in Kaha's "envious umbrella man" (umbrella here being the symbol of the PDP), "selfish man" and "the lone-mouthed man" (excerpt 1) and Kaki's "certificate forger", "embezzler", "murderer" (excerpt 2), among others.

*Land Grabber Metaphor and Verbal Abuse*

As a Commissioner of Lands and Survey, the responsibility of allocating lands rests on the commissioner. Some who have occupied the office have either used it judiciously or abused it. This is based on the enormous responsibilities that come with it. In excerpt 3, the Commissioner of Lands and Survey under the GS's government (PDP) was vying for a parliamentary position in the 2015 electioneering period. The 2015 elections in Nigeria, generally, were mind-blowing and offsetting as the incumbent President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (of the PDP) was defeated by Muhammadu Buhari who came in from the platform of the APC. In Benue State, Samuel Ortom who contested the primaries under the PDP lost to his opponent, and for popular opinion, he decamped to the APC where he was unanimously offered the ticket to contest as the sole candidate of the APC. The political terrain at that time became heated with the electorate agitating for good leadership against the existing one of Governor GS. This agitation and aggression of the electorate were enough grounds to heat the polity and cause social malaise as in the wording of the songs. Mfater Kaha's "Dickson Tarkighir" expresses dissatisfaction and lack of confidence in the Hon Commissioner, JT, as the song describes him as a land grabber who thinks the House of Representatives is likened to land sales.

### Excerpt 3:

Tiv version

Solo

*Idyu ka inya i teen ga  
Ihyarev mba vaan inya ve  
Idyu ka inya i teen ga  
Masev mba vaan inya ve...  
Komishina u teen inya  
Ishangen ka inya i teen ga*

English Transcription

*The parliament is not a land-selling enterprise  
Ihyarev are crying for their land  
The parliament is not a land-selling enterprise  
Masev are crying for their land...  
Commissioner of land sales  
Election is not a land selling enterprise 6x*

Chorus

<i>Hide se a inya yase oo</i>	<i>Bring back our land oo!</i>
<i>U ngu or u dedoo ga</i>	<i>You are not a good man!</i>
<i>Votu wase ka u Tarighir</i>	<i>Our vote is for Tarkighir</i>
<i>Dickson a ooo</i>	<i>Dickson oo</i>
<i>Ityo you soo we</i>	<i>Your kinsmen love you</i>
<i>Or a soo bikon i zenden manden</i>	<i>He who loves beaconing around</i>
<i>Yo nan a lu her a amande</i>	<i>Should stay back with beacons</i>
<i>Yemen Abuja je ne ooo</i>	<i>Off to Abuja you go</i>
<i>Dickson u za</i>	<i>Dickson you'll be at</i>
<i>Idyu ken ken 6x</i>	<i>The parliament compulsorily 6x</i>

(Adapted from Mfater Kaha's "Dickson Tarkighir", 2015)

Idyu (line 1, in the Tiv version) is a concept in Tiv that means two things; depending on the context of its use. In the first instance, it means a tete-a-tete, and in the other, it refers to an office, a parliament, to which one is elected, either at the state or national level. In this context, idyu is used to mean the House of Representatives (HoR hereafter). The HoR (parliament) is the new office to which the politician seeks election. Still serving as a commissioner, the artist compares his current position to the HoR, as he posits, "The parliament is not a land selling enterprise" (line 1). The artist demonstrates in the subsequent lines of this song that the addressee is the Honourable Commissioner who sold his kinsmen's land to foreigners while in charge of the Ministry of Land and Survey in Benue State. There is a contradiction here. How does one so described as an honourable man be seen as being dishonest? The name-calling

depicted here is: "land grabber" and "you are not a good man", (excerpt 3), these also contradict the designation, "Honourable". By implication, since the parliament is not a land-selling enterprise, it means the Commissioner is not fit to be elected into the parliament. The artist depicts him as "one who loves beaconing" and then advises that he should stay back to beacon (lines 5&6, Chorus). Another example is shown in the lyrics of the song titled "Yes Father" where the majority of the people of Benue State, based on popular opinion, clamoured for a Roman Catholic ordained Reverend Father as governor. This is after experiencing what they term the worse government from the out-going governor of the State. The phrase, "Yes father" became an ideological dictum in which the people express their preference, acceptance and eulogise the emergence of the Reverend Father. as in excerpt 4:

**Excerpt 4:**

Tiv Version

*Aondo t iwanger sen*  
*Diabolo kange ikyav*  
*Un a osough*  
*Ngu la oo, Dajoh kor oo*  
*A de yemen se a salary ma ape ga oo*

English Transcription

*God has shone down the light*  
*The devil packed his luggage*  
*To sneak out*  
*There he is; Dajo catch him*  
*He shouldn't leave with our pension/salary*

(Mfater Kaha, "Yes Father", 2023)

Although excerpt 4 shows some religious bent, it only draws allusions from there to drive home a critical point. The Tiv, like most Africans, are religious people, who import religion into all their activities, including politics (Ottoh-Agede &

Agede, 2016). The song in the excerpt is a typical example of this depiction, as the artist uses both God and the devil as metaphors for good and evil, respectively: "God has shun us the light, the devil packed his luggage to sneak out" (lines 1-3,



excerpt 4). There he is; Dajo catch him. He shouldn't leave with our pension/salary (lines 4&5). Here, the artist calls out the embezzler, the governor who refuses to pay the pensions of retirees and even the salaries of workers. This seems to be the trend in governance in the State going by the themes of all the songs selected. The narrative representation in lyrics is that the Reverend Father is the light that God uses to bring good to the people of Benue State, the Tiv in particular.

### Conclusion

In four random excerpts of the selected TPCS, the study explores the intricate relationship between metaphors and verbal abuse. Drawing insights from linguistics and sociology–culture, it depicts how metaphorical language in political songs are used both as a tool for critical analysis, and a vehicle for verbal abuse (name-calling) in Tiv political campaigns. Through the adoption of CMT, the study reveals how metaphors used in the excerpts analysed propagate verbal abuse. The study also shows that songs are deployed to shape the political landscape for the voter audience

during elections. Active metaphors are used by artists to incite conflict (name-calling), eulogise and garner support.

In conclusion, as a traditional component of culture, artists utilise metaphorical language and poetic licence within the genre of songs to promote ideological positions and evoke emotional appeals for democratic change and sustenance. The study contributes to the conversation about the intersection of language, politics and culture in shaping societal norms and values. The study recommends that artists and their sponsors or patrons (the politicians) should use language that promotes unity, respect and constructive criticism despite expressing different views. The songs should reflect and foster inclusive perspectives to promote cultural cohesion, and avoid hate speech, inflammatory lyrics and verbal abuse. The paper suggests that more studies be carried out in comparing the use of verbal abuse in political songs across regions and cultures as well as impact assessment of political songs on voting behaviour, public opinion and political outcomes.

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