METAPHOR AND COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE: A STUDY OF SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS’ CAMPAIGN TEXTS

Agbo, Joseph Odo
Department of Languages, The Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa
Nasarawa State

Abstract
The paper discusses how politicians flout Cooperation Principle in the use of metaphor in newspapers’ campaign texts. The interest of the paper is to examine the maxims flouted by politicians in electioneering campaigns as a deliberate pragmatic tool used in an effort to influence the target electorate to vote them into political offices. Using Grice’s theory of Cooperative Principle as a guide in the analysis, the paper discusses the flouting of maxims of quality, quantity, manner and relation to justify the use metaphors by the politicians as pragmatic tool for electioneering campaign strategy in the selected newspapers’ campaign texts. The analysis reveals that politicians intentionally choose to flout the various conversational maxims in order to indirectly prick the conscience of the target electorate to influence their sympathy. The paper suggested some remedies for campaign strategy. For instance, the paper is of the opinion that metaphors should be applied in discourse texts with caution so as to generate appropriate implicature for the hearer to understand.

Key words: Metaphor, Cooperative Principle, Campaign and Text

Introduction
It is possible for politicians to present campaign in language that is dominated by the use of Idioms, Proverbs, Hate Speech, Fake News, Riddles, Metaphors, etc. The selected newspapers’ campaign texts are presented mostly using metaphors. Therefore, the focus of this paper is on metaphor. Metaphors are direct comparison of two unlike items on the basis of some indirect similarity. This method of comparison could be equated to M is T or substitute M for T. Oluikpe (2006:195) defines metaphor as a implicit comparison between two essentially different objects to each other.

However, the speaker’s intention in such comparison is to project the quality of one object in another either in a negative or positive term so as to achieve clear meaning of the metaphor expressed. The politicians use metaphor of positive comparison to campaign for themselves and their party, but use negative comparison against the political opponents in order to discredit them. This method of campaign is intended to woo the target electorate to support the speaker, while influencing the electorate to reject the opposition candidates and their parties. The campaign in metaphor is carried out through the process of flouting the conversational maxims in metaphors.

The flouting of the conversational maxims by the politicians creates perception of lies, hate speech, blackmail, self-promotion, empty promises, indictment, etc which they deploy to woo the target electorate in their favour as well as to discredit the political opponents in order to have political advantages over them. It is against this backdrop that the paper seeks to discuss the flouting of conversational maxims as Pragmatic tool in campaign to hoodwink the target electorate to vote for the politicians.

Theoretical Framework
This paper is guided by Grice (1975) Cooperative Principle. The cooperative principles stipulate that conversational contribution by the speakers must be made in such a quantity as is required within the accepted purpose for which communication is carried out. The assumption that both the speakers and the hearers are observing the cooperative principle give rise to implicated meaning which are not overtly stated in the utterances but are implied via implicature. The paper seeks to examine how the flouting of conversational maxims in the metaphors is used as pragmatic tool for electioneering campaign in the selected newspapers’ campaign texts.

Clarification of Terms
1. Metaphor: Metaphor is the transfer of meaning from one word or expression to another. It is an imaginative way of
describing an object by using another object in the expression. Joshua (2016:11) defines metaphor as the use of word or phrase which transcends its literal perception. This implies that metaphors have indirect/deeper meaning in context. It is these indirect meanings created by the politician’s deliberate flouting of conversational maxims in the selected newspapers’ campaign texts that are seen as pragmatic tools used for electioneering campaigns.

2. **Cooperative Principle**: Cooperative Principle has to do with the assumption that participants in conversational encounter usually enter into a tacit agreement to speak the truth as well as give current and necessary information with sincerity of heart in order to achieve smooth and meaningful conversation (Aworo–Okoro 2017:72). The principle stipulates that, conversational contribution by the interlocutors in a discourse must be made in such a quantity as required, at a stage in which conversation occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the discussion only. These standard stipulations are referred to as the principle of conversational maxims which includes maxims of quality, quantity, Manner and Relation. The flouting of these maxims and the consequential pragmatic implicature is the basis of the discussion in the paper.

3. **Campaign**: Campaign is a process of canvassing for votes in an election. It is the means of presenting the political manifesto to the target electorate. Gingsberg (2009) defines campaign as, “An organised effort by political parties or candidates for public offices to attract the supports of votes in the election.” While Abdullahi-Idiagbo (2010) sees campaign as a means of influencing the target electorate. Therefore, campaign is a concerted effort to win the favour of the voters in an election. This paper seeks to examine how politicians flout maxims as pragmatic tool to influence the target electorate in the selected newspapers’ campaign texts.

4. **Text**: A text is a stretch of words that makes meaning. However, a text does not necessarily mean words or expression only; rather, it includes signs, symbols or figures that could convey meaning. Fukuade (1998:24) defines text as any passage, spoken or written of whatever length that forms a unified whole as opposed to a collection of unrelated sentences. The campaign texts in the newspapers are meaningful in the context. The paper discusses the flouting of conversational maxims in the use of metaphor by politicians as pragmatic tools for electioneering campaign in the selected newspaper’s campaign texts.

**Grice’s Cooperative Principle**

Grice’s Cooperative Principle is based on the assumption that both the speaker and the hearer are observing the conversational maxims in the discussion. For instance, Osisanwo posits that, conversation thrives on the cooperation between the two interactants. This implies that a successful accomplishment of meaningful conversation depends on the interlocutors’ compliance with the Grice’s conversational maxims which include: -

1. Maxims of quantity: be informative
   a. Make your contributions as informative as is required for the current purpose of the conversation.
   b. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required. Nigeria politicians flout this maxim with all sense of impunity. For example; “Every facet of our national life is deteriorating: governance has been reduced to mediocrity, incompetence and impunity” (By Engr. Rabiu Kwankwaso. Daily Sun. October 29, 2014. P3).

This utterance flouts the maxims of quantity because the speaker has given more than necessary information. He refers to every aspect of our national life without exception.

2. Maxim of quality: Try to make your contribution to be true.
   a. Do not say what you belief to be false
   b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

There are several flouting of this maxim in the Nigerian campaign texts. For example: “Jonathan chances of winning 2015 presidential elections
are 100%” (By Vincent Ogbulafor. Daily Trust, 11th December, 2014. P5).
This utterance flouts the maxim of quality because the speaker has given information which
is not true. How is he certain to assert the future event as 100%.
3. Maxim of relation: Be relevant
   a. Make your contribution relevant to the
      topic of conversational/ discussion.
   The relevance of some of the metaphors used in
campaign is in doubt. For example: “The
dangerous clouds are beginning to gather and the
vultures are circling” (By Gen. Mohammadu
Buhari. The Nation Tuesday, July 22, 2014. P4)
This utterance flouts maxim of relation because it
is not directly related to subject matter (politics)
or 2015 general elections.
4. Maxim of manner
   b. (super maxim): Be perspicuous
   c. (sub maxim):
      i. Avoid obscurity of expression
      ii. Avoid ambiguity
      iii. Be brief (avoid unnecessary
           prolixity)
      iv. Be orderly
   v. Frame whatever you say in the form
      most suitable for any reply that
would be regarded as appropriates,
or, facilitate. (Napoli, 1996);
Most of the metaphors used by politicians in
campaign texts appear to have flouted the
maxims, which appear to be one of the common
features of the campaign texts in Nigerian. Grice
perceives the codes governing conversation as
being derivable from the general principles
guiding standard social decorum of human
rational cooperative action.
Maxims flouting
Maxims flouting may be described as
deviation from the standard bearing in the
application of lexical item in utterances. This is
collocation clash in the syntactic axis of a
sentence structure in order to generate extra
linguistic meaning. Levinson (1983) posits that,
maxims specify what the conversational
participants ought to do when they engage in
conversation in order to achieve a maximally
efficiently, rational and cooperation in
conversation. Osisanwo (2008) attests to this
when he emphasises that, interlocutors comply
with Grice maxims of cooperative principle,
when they speak sincerely, relevantly, and clearly
by providing sufficient information during
conversation.
   However, Levinson (1983) and Finch
(2005) have explained some cogent conditions
under which maxims of Cooperative Principle
could be flouted or violated. For example, Finch
gives a clear distinction between flouting and
violating of maxims. According to Finch,
violation entails providing too much or too little
information as may be required, being irrelevant
or too vague, thereby leading to communication
failure. Flouting of maxims on the other hand, is
apparent to the hearer that the speaker is
intentionally using indirect or non-literal form of
language in order to generate meanings beyond
the literal level of expression. In this sense,
maxims flouting enables the participants to
comply with the maxim of Cooperative Principle
indirectly via inferences rather than directly from
the syntactic configuration of the utterance.
   For example, if one calls a student who
scored F9 in all the subjects he took in NECO ‘A
brilliant student,’ he flouts the maxim of quality.
Yet, by pragmatic inference, the hearer would
still construe the meaning of ‘brilliant’ in this
context to mean the opposite of what the speaker
has literally expressed in this situation based on
the robustness of the assumption of the
Cooperative Principle. So, when a speaker
deliberately flouts maxims, he forces the hearer
to do an extensive inference in order to arrive at
the opposite or deeper meaning of what is
expressed literally.
   The hearers’ ability to understand what
the speaker conveys or intent to convey means,
according to Levinson (1983) that, the over-
arching cooperation would be sustained.
Therefore, the interlocutors still observe the
Cooperative Principle through inferences.
Levinson illustrates flouting of maxims in the
conversation thus:
   A. Where is bill?
   B. There is a yellow VW outside
      Sue’s house.
Levinson explains that, B’s contribution, taken
literally, fails to answer A’s question and then seems to flout the maxims of quality and relevance. We might therefore see B’s utterance to be interpreted as a non-cooperative response, a brushing aside of A’s concern with a change of topic. Yet it is clear that despite this apparent failure of cooperation at the surface level, we try to interpret B’s utterance as nevertheless cooperation at some deeper level. We do this by assuming that it is in fact cooperation, and then asking ourselves what possible connection there could be between the location of Bill and the location of a yellow VW car, and then arrive at the suggestion (which B effectively conveys), that if Bill has a yellow VW car, he may be in Sue’s house (since his car is in front of Sue’s house).

In this case, such inference arises to preserve the assumption of cooperation. It is instructive to note that, deliberate flouting of maxims generates pragmatic implicature needed to convey the speaker’s meaning and what/how he wants the hearer to understand in his utterance. The notion of implicature is relevant to this study because, it is assumed; politicians actually use metaphors in the selected newspapers’ campaign texts for specific goals which could only be established through implicature and inferences.

### Presentation and Analysis of Data

The metaphors are presented together with the campaign texts and the analysis of conversational maxims in the metaphors is carried out side by side in the table. The campaign texts are labeled serially as Text 1-5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign Texts</th>
<th>Analysis of Maxim</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text 1</strong></td>
<td>The metaphor flouts Grice’s maxim of quality – which states that the speaker should make contribution that is truth. In this metaphor, the politician has no prove that his contribution is truth. How true is it that APC has not come onboard would be better than PDP. The claim is unfounded. Its pragmatic significant as tool for campaign is that it makes an indirect appeal to the target electorate to vote for APC. How is he sure that APC would be the salvation of Nigeria. His contribution lacks the truth.</td>
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<td>“. . . APC is an alternative platform for the salvation of Nigeria”. Nigeria has lost track under the current PDP Government and corruption has become its worst enemy. Unless we go back to the core values which the APC represents, then we are doomed as a nation. APC has come to correct the evils of PDP. I have tackled corruption in my state in line with APC principles. It is high time we got serious by tackling corruption.</td>
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<td><strong>Text 2</strong></td>
<td>The metaphor flouts the maxim of manner. The maxim demands that the speaker’s contribution should be perspicuous and unambiguous. Though in this case, obscurity and ambiguity are significant features of metaphor. These features compel the speaker and the hearers to engage in joint meaning interpretation to under the pragmatic meaning. The metaphor is over exaggeration. It is ambiguous in this context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oyegun said: our party has much to do. The state of our nation is highly disturbed. It could be said with some justifications that our great country, “Nigeria is on the rope. As if these woes are not enough, our situation has been compounded by the amazingly visionless national leadership that has been inflicted on Nigerian people by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) …”</td>
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<td><strong>Text 3</strong></td>
<td>This metaphor flouts the maxim of relation which requires that contribution should be relevant to the topic of discussion. Toast appears to be out of place here, but it is metaphoric. Its significant as pragmatic tool for campaign is that the politician uses it to make an indirect appeal to the target electorate to vote for APC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aminu Tambuwal said his decision was dictated by emerging political realities in his home state, Sokoto. “He declared that APC has become the toast of the residents of the state”, and therefore, he must go with the people. Hon. Aminu Tambuwal Speaker House of Representative.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Text 4</strong></td>
<td>The metaphor flouts the maxim of quantity which requires that the speaker should not make his contribution more informative than is required. Giant</td>
</tr>
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</table>
constructive criticism, all in an attempt to portray the Government of Goodluck Jonathan in bad light. In my opinion and well-meaning Nigerians, the transformation agenda of the present administration has witnessed giant stride in Agricultural, power and infrastructural sectors of Nigerian economy pushing high the rating of Nigeria as biggest econo...implying that APC is an alternative opportunity for the electorate to have good government in Nigeria. The metaphor, platform for salvation flouts conversational maxim of quality. This maxim states that the speaker in a conversational event must always speak the truth for the purpose of a meaningful interaction.

Therefore, in the literal level of this metaphor, it appears to be a false claim hence salvation is mostly associated with freedom of the human soul. This implies that the interlocutors are not cooperating by saying the truth in the conversation. However, at the pragmatic level of meaning, the flouting of this maxim rather generates implicature. This pragmatic implicature directs or connects the speaker/hearer and the writer/reader through inference to understand the meaning of the metaphor not just as the salvation of soul, but freedom from bad PDP’s Government.

Stride in almost all the sectors of the social economic development is an over-statement of PDP’s achievements. The speaker’s literally commends PDP and indirectly recommends it to the electorate for 2015 general elections. The speech act in this metaphor amounts to a campaign. The commendation in the metaphor is an indirect appeal to the target electorate to vote for the Government of Goodluck Jonathan and PDP.

The metaphor flouts the maxim of quality. Do not say what you believe is false. The politician may not even know how the present Dangote was created, how can be promise to create more Dangote? The politician commissively appeals to Kano State electorate to vote him into power in 2015. Its pragmatic significant as campaign tool is that it is a promise to influence the target electorate.

Discussion on the Data
The politicians flout conversational maxims deliberately in the metaphors used in the selected campaign texts. This is done to enable them pass the campaign messages to the target electorate indirectly through metaphoric expressions. The discussion on the data describes the metaphor flouting in the campaign texts.

Text 1: The metaphor in text 1 is “alternative platform for salvation.” It implies that APC is an alternative opportunity for the electorate to have good government in Nigeria. The metaphor, platform for salvation flouts conversational maxim of quality. This maxim states that the speaker in a conversational event must always speak the truth for the purpose of a meaningful interaction.

Therefore, maxim flouting is a deliberate pragmatics device in conversation to provide cooperation at the level of pragmatic meaning. Consequently, the metaphor, “Salvation” is interpreted at the indirect level of cooperative principle between the speaker/hearer and writer/reader to be freedom from bad leadership of PDP in Nigeria. In the context of the selected campaign text, the cooperation is between the politicians who presented the metaphors and the target electorate who read the metaphors in the newspapers’ campaign texts. Though, the maxim of quality is flouted, cooperative principle is still sustained between the politicians and the target electorate through pragmatic inference.

Text 2: The metaphor in the campaign text is “Nigeria on a rope.” This metaphor implies that the country is on a tether. The politician flouts the maxim of manner which states that the speaker should endeavour to avoid ambiguous expression in conversations. The speaker flouts the maxim of manner in the sense that the issue of rope seems to be ambiguous in this campaign context. But, at the pragmatic meaning, the interlocutors understand the metaphor, “rope” not in its literal terms but in political sense as Nigeria being in a fix politically. Thus, despite the flouting of maxim, the interlocutors are still cooperating at the pragmatics level of meaning.
The pragmatic significant of this metaphor in the campaign is that the politicians used it to discourage the electorate from voting PDP again. It means vote for APC instead of PDP that is holding Nigeria to ransom. The metaphor is used as campaign strategy.

**Text 3:** The metaphor in this text is “Toast.” The politician flouts the maxim of relation which states that the speaker should make his contribution to be relevant to the topic of discussion. Toast in the context of this campaign text seems to be out of place and unrelated to the text. This is essentially so because toast ordinarily is a register in celebration where people toast wine to cheer the celebrant.

However, there is cooperation at the deep pragmatic meaning hence the interlocutors understand the meaning of toast in campaign text as acceptance of All Progressives Congress, APC in Sokoto State. Thus, this metaphor indirectly means an appeal to the Sokoto State electorate to vote for APC. The maxim flouting generates cooperation in conversation at the inferential level.

**Text 4:** The metaphor in this text is “Giant Stride” which implies meaningful achievement/progress of PDP’s Government in Nigeria. This politician flouts the maxim of quantity which states that the speaker should not make his contribution to be more informative than is required in the conversation. This flouting of maxims connects the speakers/writers and the hearers/readers through pragmatic inference to understand giant stride to mean the meaningful achievements of PDP Government.

Therefore, while the speaker flouts the maxim of quantity by stating an overstatement or exaggeration, it is still understood in the campaign text as meaningful achievement of PDP’s government. This is the essence of the metaphor as tool for campaign.

**Text 5:** The metaphor in the campaign text is “more dangote.” This politician flouts the maxim of quality which states that the speaker should always speak the truth in conversation. This metaphor flouts this maxim of quality because the promise to create more dangotes is not true. The politician’s promise cannot be true because the politician in question does not even know how the present Dangote was made or he did not contribute to his making so it appears there is no cooperation between the speaker and the hearer. However, the interlocutors understand the meaning of dangote to mean improvement of the lives of the Kano State people via pragmatic inference. Therefore, there is cooperation between the politicians and the target electorate at the inferential level of pragmatics. There is cooperation in the conversation as the electorate understands the meaning of the metaphor as a campaign promise to better the life of Sokoto State indigenes.

Consequently, in all the selected metaphors, the politicians flout one maxim or the other which appears as if the interlocutors are not cooperating in the conversational event. However, the cooperative principle is still sustained at the pragmatic level of meaning between the speakers and the hearers. In the campaign texts, this cooperative principle in the conversation is sustained between the politicians who presented the metaphors and the target electorate, who are the readers of the campaign texts. Therefore, the electorate understands the campaign messages presented in the metaphor by the politicians.

**Findings**

In the course of data analysis and discussion, the paper arrived at the following findings.

1. Two metaphors flout the maxim of quality; one metaphor each flouts the maxims of quality, manner and relation.
2. The flouting of maxims appears as if the interlocutors are not cooperating in the conversation. However, the flouting generates meaning implication at the pragmatic level that provides indirect interpretation of the metaphors. This understanding of the implication of the metaphor in the campaign texts reveals that the interlocutors are cooperating in the conversation indirectly.

It is therefore clear that the flouting of maxims in the selected campaign texts is applied to generate pragmatic meanings in the metaphor for electioneering campaigns in the texts.
Conclusion

The paper discusses the flouting of conversational maxims in metaphor by politicians to generate pragmatic meanings as tools for electioneering campaign. The metaphors are sampled from newspapers’ campaign texts. The data analysis is based on Grice’s Theory Cooperative Principle. The analysis and discussion on data reveal that the interlocutor, though flout conversational maxims at the literal meaning of the metaphors, but cooperation is still sustained at the pragmatics inferences of the metaphors.

Therefore, the pragmatic meaning of the metaphors is understood clearly by the politicians who presented the metaphors and the target electorate who read them in the campaign texts. The metaphors are used as pragmatic strategy for electioneering campaigns. This is the aim of the paper.

Recommendations

The use of metaphor is an indirect means of communication therefore interlocutors should apply metaphor with caution so as to presents its appropriate meaning in the context. The flouting of conversational maxims generates the speaker’s intended meaning at the pragmatic level of utterance so users of metaphor should ensure that appropriate implicature is generated for effective communication through the application of metaphors in discourse texts. Metaphor should be applied effectively for the listener to easily access meaningful clues. When metaphors are used effectively it could be a wonderful tool for meaningful conversation in discourse texts in all disciplines.

References


