

HATE SPEECH AND NATIONAL COHESION

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Abstract

The use of hate speech by Nigerian politicians on social media, national dailies and television channels is alarming. Hate speech is any abhorrent utterance, gesture, writing or form of linguistic behaviour which could provoke people to harmful action and reaction. Such speech derogates and robs the target audience of their dignity. This study specifically examines the phenomenon of hate speech by Nigerian politicians to find out its linguistic implicatures in national cohesion. Extracting data from social media, national dailies and television channels, this work qualitatively analyses the data using cooperative principles' theoretical framework. The results of the finding show the evidence of quadruple maxims of the cooperative principle: quantity, quality, relevance and manner. In essence, the study reveals that the hate speech of Nigerian politicians is informative; albeit, it breaks some of the maxims of the cooperative principle. The study, therefore, shows traces of falsity, lack of adequate evidence, sarcasm, irrelevance, and unnecessary brevity. The analyses demonstrate that Nigerian politicians impolitely make hate speech against their political opponents across political parties, regions, religions, and ethnicity. In adherence to the tenets of the cooperative principle, the 'implicatures' of the speech act are incitement to national incoherence, political violence, regional hatred, religious intolerance and ethnic bickering. Premised on the above adverse effects

of hate speech, this study advocates for the appropriate prosecution of any partisan or political party who violates the Prohibition Acts of hate speeches to avoid an incidence of a debacle in Nigeria as recorded in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Kenya and Rwanda years ago.

Keywords: cooperative principles, national coherence, hate speech, Nigerian politicians, and violence

Introduction

Language is a fundamental tool in every human activity. Its function to humanity is inestimable. In the context of function, language has the characteristics of a double edged sword. It serves as a tool for peaceful co-existence as well as disunity within the linguistic group. The courteous speech promotes peaceful co-existence, harmony, love and cohesion amongst individuals and the nation at large. On the other hand, a face-threatening speech of any form (verbal, written or sign assault) on individuals or groups based on shared attributes is inimical to national cohesion. The use of “pejorative or discriminatory speech has resulted in attempts to exploit fragilities and polarizations within specific nation targeting ordinary users as active participants in the spread of hate and disinformation” (Udupa, Gagliardone, Deem & Csuka, 2020, p. 2). The height of hate speech by Nigerian politicians places national cohesion under terrific strain. In essence, the speeches of influential politicians in Nigeria today trail the path of disunity and destruction.

In every general election especially the 2019 and 2023 general elections, political stalwarts, staunch religious figures, public officers, citizens, and ethnic nationalists deployed hate speech during campaign periods. During the 2015 general election, Isola (2018) observes that “traditional and social media contenders deployed derogatory words and terms in local dialects to label and demean opponents” (p.5). There is a trace of evidence in Isola’s view in the hands of the owners of independent media houses. Some of the politicians employed hate speeches against their opposition. For instance, the Television Continental (TVC) and a group of radio stations like Radio Continental, Adaba FM and others which are owned by prominent members of the ruling party, All Progressives Congress (APC), and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), which are owned by the federal government and controlled by members of the ruling party, were used to proliferate hate speech during election periods against the opposition parties. Also, the Nigerian dailies like the Sun newspaper, the Nation newspaper, magazines, and local dailies owned by APC stalwarts were effectively used in spreading hate speech in the election periods against their opponents. Olowojolu (2016) remarks that in the 2015 general elections, popular media outlets in Nigeria, like AIT, Channels TV, This Day, Vanguard and The Nation *inter alia* were flushed with campaigns by several political parties displaying crass abuse of the right of free speech including hate speech and other types of foul language.

This paper examines the phenomenon of hate speech by Nigerian politicians to discuss its linguistic implicatures in national cohesion. The pervasiveness of hate speech in media by politicians is worrisome. Its use in politicking incites rancor and disunity thereby generating all forms of violence. It is, therefore, to address this ugly trend in election campaigns and bring to light the implicatures of flouting maxims of conversational cooperative principles in sustainable national cohesion that necessitated this investigation. For ease of reference, this paper is in five sections. The first and current section is the introduction which gives insight into the discourse. The second section is the literature review, which reviews the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The third section is the methodology. This section spells out the instrument of data, the analytical tool, and method of the analysis adopted in the study. The penultimate section is the data presentation and analysis and finally, the summary of the findings and conclusion.

2. Literature review

This section is discussed under two sub-headings: conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

2.1 Hate speech

Hate speech is a language behaviour that provokes an individual or a group of people based on their ideology, belief, and alignment with a given affiliative group. This is a result of speech production that involves human self-esteem, fairness, and fundamental human rights. Hate speech is a kind of biased speech addressed to people from diverse shared, tribal, cultural, religious, political, and ideological groups. The bias colouration in hate speech informed Cohen-Almagor's definition of hate speech as "a bias-motivated, hostile, malicious speech aimed at a person or a group of people because of some of their actual or perceived innate characteristics" (2013, p. 43). Drawing from this concept, hate speech expresses discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving, antagonistic, and/or prejudicial attitudes toward the following factors: gender, race, religion, ethnicity, colour, nationality, disability, or sexual orientation. In effect, hate speech victimizes the targeted groups and stirs up insensitivity and brutality against the target group.

Following Guterres (2023), the concept of hate speech is "an offensive discourse that targets a group or an individual based on inherent characteristics such as race, religion or gender and that may threaten social peace" (p. 1). UNO (2023) sees hate speech as "any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor" (p. 2). The use of hate speech in Nigeria is traced back to the pre-independence era but the colonial masters technically managed its negative manifestation. According to Seng and Hunt (1986), the first inciting hate speeches were made by then Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Presidential candidate of Nigeria People's Party (NPP) in both 1979 and 1983 Nigerian general elections, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and the national chairman of Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Chief Obafemi Awolowo. This goes to suggest that the earlier nationalists employed hate speeches fiercely before, during, and after independence. This observable fact fueled the polity for electoral violence, sectarian killings, military coups, and civil war. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2013) notes that hate speech includes:

- (a) all dissemination of ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred, by whatever means; (b) incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against members of a group on grounds of their race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin; (c) threats or incitement to violence against persons or groups on the grounds in (b) above; (d) expression of insults, ridicule or slander of persons or groups or justification of hatred, contempt or discrimination on the grounds in (b) above, when it clearly amounts to incitement to hatred or discrimination; and (e) participation in organizations and activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination (p.4).

Politicians use cooperate bodies, religious groups and distinguished figures in society to express their biased speech. For instance, agitations for the sovereign of the Arewa Republic, Biafra Republic, Niger-Delta Republic, and Oduduwa Republic by different ethnic groups during the 2019 and 2023 elections were high and largely pronounced and demonstrated within and outside Nigeria through media and social networks using hate speeches. These agitations were so apparently demonstrated that the continued existence of the nation as a single sovereign nation is a thorn in the flesh of the agitators. These agitations were politically induced and full of hate speeches against one ethnic group or the other. A pointer that the agitations expressed in hate speech are political weapons against opponents is that the protests are usually

uncontrollably experienced during every election year. The moment election was conducted; the agitations dismemberment of the nation dwindled.

Drawing from the manner hate speech is used with impunity in Nigeria, one could be right to presume that hate speech has been adopted as an integral part of the electioneering campaign. Ezeibe (2015) remarks that “hate speech has eaten deep into the Nigerian polity and it has continued unabated. The hatred among the ethnic groups that make up Nigeria has intensified as the use of hate speech continues unregulated” (p. 5). Noticeably, there is a manifestation of hatred among the dominant ethnic groups: Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. Each ethnic group makes pejorative statements against the other. Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) (2015) shows that 70 percent of the people disseminating hate speech in the Nigerian social media space use their identity and can be reached for follow up actions. More so, over 65 percent of makers of hate speech are males and a greater percentage of the contents of the posts use coded language that had been used in the past to generate violence. Ilorin (2023) states that “hate speech breeds abhorrence, incitement and division. According to Ilorin, the specific ways to minimise hate speech in Nigeria while securing the right to freedom of speech is by enforcing Nigerians to be abided by the international human rights law on hate speech” (p. 93). Fino (2020) describes international human rights law as the system of rules that most sovereign States subscribe to which has established a consensus on prohibiting hate speech. Nevertheless, despite this established law prohibiting hate speech, Nigerian politicians abuse it unimaginably.

National cohesion

National cohesion refers to the act of bringing together a variety of individuals from different cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds in a specific setting or polity for a peaceful co-existence and growth of the nation. National cohesion can be achieved when people from distinct ethnic, cultural, religious and ideological backgrounds within the nation have total allegiance to their nation over and above their ethnic groupings. Onifade and Imhonopi (2013) describe national cohesion as a relationship of community among people within the same political entity. It is a state of mind or disposition to be united, to act together, and to be committed to mutual programmes. Umaru and Usman (2015) define national cohesion as:

a process that produces an omnibus of initiatives put in place by a state, its representative, or institution guided by respect for the unique traditions and cultural background of ethnicities sharing the same polity with the goal of harmonizing all interest, through a form of dialogue and representation and addressing differences that may be divisive and conflictual using the instrument of fairness, justice and equity in the sharing of resources, benefits, opportunities and responsibilities in order to guaranteed stability, longevity and prosperity of the polity as long as the inhabitants decide to remain in the polity (p. 30).

Given the Umaru and Usman statement above, one can see that national cohesion is made possible when ethnic groups within a political setting maintain unity by coming together to reach consensus, social structure, and function in society which brings about social order.

To Ngafi, Afolabi, and Roslyn (2022), “constituting national cohesion among different segments of a population is a difficult task” (p. 3). This is true because when people of mixed attributes are joined in one nation, there are bound to be social differences, ethnic and cultural variations, political discords, economic rivalries, and historical antagonisms like in many African countries like Nigeria. The only remedy to this problem is to eschew ethnic jingoism, religious bigotry and cultural bias among the citizens of the nation. This is because national cohesion is a necessary condition for the political and economic

development of every nation. In this study, national cohesion is, therefore, the process of unifying a society together from separate independent parts for a common purpose. In other words, it is the process of coming together to fight against anything that affects the human development of a particular group of people. It connotes a state of being one and united in one spirit.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is Cooperative Principle (CP) as propounded by H. P. Grice (1975). Grice argues that as humans, we are social beings and when we talk we usually do so with other humans. In doing so, each conversationalist should speak sincerely, relevantly, and clearly, while providing sufficient information. Given this fact, CP is a set of maxims that are expected in conversations. It consists of four maxims: quality, quantity, relevance or relation, and manner. Briefly, the first three maxims: quantity, quality and relation pertain to the content of the message; the last one, the maxim of manner is related to how the message is constructed. Maxim of quantity is saddled with the amount of information provided by the speaker. By so doing, the utterance should be informative as is required and should not be more informative than is required. Maxim of quality deals with the truthfulness of the information. The idea of truthfulness negates falsity and lack of evidence. The maxim of relation is concerned with the suitability of the speech to the context of communication. Finally, the maxim of manner informs conversationalists to be perspicuous. In essence, this maxim tells the communicators to avoid obscurity of utterance, ambiguity, and unnecessary prolixity and be orderly. These four maxims are to be followed to be cooperative in conversation. This paper adopts these cooperative principles as a tool to discover the applicability of these conversational maxims in the hate speech of politicians during general elections.

Sometimes during a conversation, these maxims can be violated and or flouted. Violation of maxims occurs when the communicators break the maxims furtively in a way that other people do not know. For instance, maxims of quality and quantity can be violated by secretly telling lies and being economical in providing information. Also, flouting the maxims occurs when conversationalists blatantly break the maxims which are noticeable to the people involved in the conversation. When this happens, it implies that the speaker wants the hearer to infer some extra meaning over and above what is said. Grice refers to such linguistic behaviour as implicature hence extra meaning is deduced from the communication. In other words, conversational implicature occurs in a speech when an added meaning is communicated outside the underlying meaning of the speech made.

The study is, therefore designed to discover the quality and quantity of hate speech. The maxims of quality and quantity are justified if the hate speeches tell the truth or say something provable by adequate evidence and have basic information as required. In addition, the maxims of relevance or relation and manner test the significance of the response to the topic of discussion, clarity and the direct nature of the speech. In other words, the choice of this framework is informed by the desire to find out if the hate speeches correspond to the cooperative principles of conversation like being informative, truthful, relevant, and unambiguous. This is tenable using Grice's two distinctive general levels of meaning in language which are: the level of the meaning of what is said and the level of what is meant, not the other way around (Börjesson, 2014, p. 100). This distinction is very important since it constitutes the foundation for what Grice called implicature. From time to time during conversations, inferences arise that give further meaning to utterances. These inferences are referred to as implicatures. In using this framework, the study will be able to ascertain if CP maxims are obeyed or not among Nigerian politicians during the campaign in the 2019 and 2023 general elections.

Methodology

This study uses a descriptive method of analysis. The analysis is based on Gricean's CP which holds that to have comprehensive communication, there should be some maxims that the persons have to observe, and flouting these maxims in communication has implicatures. The cooperative principle framework is discussed in 2.3 above. The data used in the analysis are secondary sources. They were culled at random from social media, national dailies, and television channels. The data were analysed qualitatively using four maxims of the cooperative principle.

Data presentation and analysis

This section presented and analysed data used in this study. The analysis is divided into four headings: quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. These quadruple headings are the four maxims of the cooperative principle, which are a set of norms that are anticipated in conversation. Each heading analyses the extracted data separately as shown below.

Maxim of quality

Maxim of quality is observed in a conversation where what is said is true with substantial evidence. Looking at the extracted data, the maxim of quality is flouted in most of them to a given extent. Flouting of the maxim occurs if a speaker deliberately deviates from the cooperative principle of conversation to create implicature(s). This does not imply that the speaker is misleading the audience or being uncooperative. The speaker is rather asking the listener to look for meaning aside from the underlying semantic level. Flouting as a lexeme was introduced by Grice to explain the process in which a conversational implicature is produced by flouting the maxim(s). In this regard, in extract 1 (see appendix), the maxim of quality is flouted. The expression is untrue; as a result, it lacks empirical evidence. In extract 1, "...today APC now resembles Oshiomole's physical appearance" is a fallacious statement since APC Presidential candidate won the 2019 and 2023 general elections. There is an evidence of conversational implicature in the speech. The conversationalist breaks the maxims in an unconcealed way that is obvious to people. This is shown in the inferences that give further meaning to the utterances. For instance, the physical appearance of Adams Oshomole as a party stalwart represents APC in the speech. Oshomole is distinguished in appearance but may not be awesome in looking to symbolize a ruling party that has produced President in two successions.

In addition, there are traces of violation of the maxim of quality in the following extracts:

2. "That someone's head was sliced with a machete does not mean that the rerun was not peaceful"
3. "Yes, the herdsman values even the life of the cow more than his own life. That is how God has created him."
4. "IPOB is a terrorist group"

In the data above, the maxims of quality are not obeyed. This is justified given that the statements are false and not provable by adequate evidence. For instance, in extract 2 above, Olusegun Agbaje, the Osun State Resident Electoral Commissioner boldly said on Channels TV on September 28, 2018 that an election where someone's head was smashed with a machete is peaceful lacks sincerity in honesty. Describing the election as peaceful with clear evidence of the violence that led to breaking someone's head is contextually unrealistic. Relatively, extracts 3 and 4 negate the maxim of quality in every respect. Life is so precious to humanity that no one would value the life of a cow more than his own life. Also, proscribing IPOB as a terrorist group by Federal High Court, Abuja on September 20, 2017, is a misleading notion. IPOB is an

armless and non-violent group of individuals that agitate for Biafran freedom from Nigeria. Both extracts 3 and 4 infringed on the maxim of quality.

From the foregoing, the maxim of quality is violated in extracts 2, 3, and 4 above leading to conversational implicatures. The conversationalists break the maxims furtively in a way that other people do not notice it. The speeches are beautifully coated in a manner that people do not know the reality of the statements. There is no other level of meaning conveyed beyond the semantic meaning of the utterances.

4.2 Maxim of quantity

The maxim of quantity is used to measure a speech to find out if the message conveyed is informative and not more than necessary. In examples 5, 6, and 7 below, the maxim of quantity is flouted. The expressions contain more information than is required. They express a different level of meaning outside the semantic sense in the utterances.

5. "From today, June 6, 2017, when this proclamation is signed, the North, a critical player in the Nigerian project, hereby declares that it will no longer be disposed to coexisting with the Igbos and shall take definite steps to end the partnership by pulling out of the current federal arrangement."

6. "They are killing my people in public, after killing my people they want to try me in private? That person is mad. I won't allow it. Tell Buhari that's what I said; that he is mad. He cannot jail me. He cannot jail me. He is a mad man."

7. "If they contest (Northerners) they are wasting their time. He who pays the piper will dictate the tune. We own them. We are feeding them. They are parasites. A beggar has no choice...They are beggars and parasites"

The extracts above exemplify clear evidence of the maxim of quantity violation. Looking at the extracts, the pieces of information contained in the expressions are more than needed. The breaking of the cooperative principle resulted in the creation of conventional and conversational implicatures. For instance, extract 5, contains more information than is required. Related issues are played in extracts 6 and 7. The implicature of flouting this maxim is demonstrated in the inferences that provide additional meaning to the utterances. The extracts are not meant to be interpreted at a surface level since certain deeper meanings are conveyed. The reiteration of "...he is mad. He cannot jail me. He cannot jail me. He is a mad man." and "...we own them. We are feeding them. They are parasites. A beggar has no choice...They are beggars and parasites" in extract 6 and 7 appear unnecessary, though, it is coated with inferences. These inferences are interpretable in multiple ways which are outside the surface level of the meaning of the utterances. Drawing from the pictures that emerged from the extracts, the inferences are calculated establishment of conventional and conversational implicatures with the intent that leads to erosion of national cohesion, religious tolerance, political harmony, and ethnic integration.

Maxim of relevance

The maxim of relevance or relation affirms what participants have to do to converse relevantly. This maxim shows that for an expression to be relevant as an acceptable conversational contribution; it should be related to the subject of discussion. In the data used for this study, this maxim of relevance is flouted. Flouting the maxim indicates that there are implicatures that do not overtly obey the maxim. The utterances in 8, 9, and 10 below flout the maxim of relevance. The expressions in the excerpts below fail to obey the maxim of relevance. For instance, see extracts 8 – 10 below:

8. "I don't know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room."

9. "No Igbo man should attend any Church where the pastor is a Yoruba man, they are criminals and fools."

10. "It is going to be rig and roast. We are prepared not to go to court but drive them out"

The extracts 8 – 10 above violated the relevant maxim. The idea behind flouting the relevant maxim could be intentionally and deliberately done to hide the truth, save face, satisfy and cheer the hearer, or even swiftly change the subject of discussion. Following the adequate provision of the irrelevant answer in extract 8 above, it implies that the speaker failed to observe the maxim of relevance and consequently, this raised 'dusty'. Contextually, the speaker wants the hearer to infer some extra meaning over and above what he said. The failure of the speaker to obey the relevant maxim does not mean that the speaker is a bad communicator but he wants additional meaning to be communicated outside the underlying meaning of the speech made. The implicatures, therefore, give listeners the inferences that generate additional meaning beyond the semantic surface level.

Maxim of manner

The maxim of manner is concerned with the orderly way a speech is made. This does not mean what is said but how it is said. The manner an utterance is delivered can inform how it is interpreted. The manner some of the speeches used in this analysis were presented flouted the maxim of manner. Flouting of maxims of manner and its implicature occur when the utterances are not orderly. The utterances in excerpts 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 below flouted the maxim of manner. The expressions in the excerpts fail to achieve the maxim of manner because of disorderliness and obscurity. Consequently, there are intended meaning behind the surface meaning in the expressions. For instance:

11. "I'm a Biafran and we are going to crumble the zoo. Some idiots who are not educated said that they'll arrest me, and I ask them to come. I am in Biafra land. If any of them leaves Biafra land alive know that this is not IPOB. Tell them that.

12. "I hope you have a copy of the election results. The constituencies, for example, who gave me 97% [of the vote], cannot, in all honesty, be treated on some issues with constituencies that gave me 5%"

13. "Anybody that come and tell you change, stone that person... What you did not do in 1985, is it now that old age has caught up with you that you want to come and change... You cannot change rather you will turn back to a baby"

14. "Buhari would likely die in office if elected, recall that Murtala Muhammed, Sani Abacha and Umaru Yar'Adua, all former heads of state from the Northwest like Buhari, had died in office".

15. "On Saturday, if anyone of you, I swear in the name of God, goes against my wish that Ambode will be the next governor of Lagos state, the person is going to die inside this water... For the Igbos and others in Lagos, they should go where the Oba of Lagos heads to..."

The extracts 11 – 15 above flouted the maxim of manner. This is because the extracts are not presented in an orderly manner. This flouting of the maxim of manner generated a conversational implicature. The implicature is the conversational element that conveys additional meaning which is behind the semantic meaning of the words. For instance, extracts 11 and 13 are not adequately organised. The form in the utterances presented flouted the maxim of manner. This is justifiable because being educated does not place anyone above the law; rather, education enhances one's sense of reasoning, thought, and action.

Notwithstanding the level of education one attains, he can be arrested by the appropriate authority designed to do so by law when the person goes against the rule of law. The issue of being educated or not is immaterial. As a result of deviating from the maxim of manner, the extracts are shrouded in obscurity and ambiguity.

In a related manner, the expression alone in extracts 13 and 15 above paints a clear picture of the facial expression of the speakers which in turn introduced another meaning aside from the surface meaning level. For instance, a threat to break someone's head or throw someone into the river because the person talked about 'change' or votes against your candidate is beyond the surface level of meaning. Drawing from the implied meaning that emerged from the extracts, the inferences are the premeditated establishment of conventional and conversational implicatures to create national disunity, calumny, and violence within the nation among shared attributes.

5. Summary and conclusion

This study examines the phenomenon of hate speech by Nigerian politicians to find out its implicatures in national cohesion. It is evident in the analysis that the four maxims of the cooperative principle are violated and flouted. The deviation resulted in conversational implicatures. Taking into account Gricean's maxims of cooperative principles used in this study about national cohesion, it is possible to establish that the implicatures of flouting these maxims are shown in the inferences that give further meaning to the utterances. The findings of the analysis show that the maxim of quality is disobeyed. In addition, the result shows that flouting the maxim of quality does not imply that the speaker is misleading the audience or uncooperative but rather asking the listener to look for meaning aside from the underlying semantic level. Relatively, the maxim of quantity is violated. This is shown when the information given is too much than necessary. Also, the results of the analysis demonstrate that the maxim of relevance or relation is not obeyed. The findings reveal that the idea behind violating the relevant maxim is intentionally done to hide the truth, save face, satisfy and cheer the hearer or even swiftly change the subject of discussion. The study equally finds out that the maxim of manner is flouted. The results show that the utterances are not orderly.

In conclusion, this study provided adequate evidence of a violation of the quadruple maxims of the cooperative principle. Breaking the maxims resulted in inferences. The implicature of flouting this maxim is shown in the inferences that give further meaning to the utterances. The inferences are calculated establishment of conventional and conversational implicatures with negative pragmatic effects of incitement to national incoherence, violence, demeaning, hatred, and contempt against other members with shared attributes like party, religion and ethnicity. The phenomenon of hate speech in Nigeria during the election has taken an extensive dimension. In this regard, this study advocates for the appropriate prosecution of any partisan or political party that violates the Prohibition Acts of hate speeches to avoid the incidence of a debacle in Nigeria as recorded in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Kenya and Rwanda years ago.

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APPENDIX

1. “Adams Oshiomole is to APC what Modu Sheriff was to PDP. The only difference is that PDP had enough time before the election to eject Modu Sheriff, while the APC has no such luxury. Alas, today APC now resembles Oshiomole’s physical appearance” – Reno Omokri on his Twitter handle (October 22, 2018).
2. “That someone’s head was sliced with a machete does not mean that the rerun was not peaceful” – Olusegun Agbaje, Osun State REC on Channels TV (September 28, 2018). Culled from Femi Fani-Kayode’s Twitter handle.
3. “Yes, the herdsman values even the life of the cow more than his own life. That is how God has created him.” – Aishatu Dukku; January 27, 2018. Source: punchng.com/benue-killings-knocks-over-lawmakers-comparison-of-cow-with-human-life/
4. IPOB is a terrorist group – Federal High Court Abuja; September 20, 2017. Source: punchng.com/court-affirms-ipobs-proscription-designation-as-terrorist-group/
5. “I’m a Biafran and we are going to crumble the zoo. Some idiots who are not educated said that they’ll arrest me, and I ask them to come. I am in Biafra land. If any of them leaves Biafra land alive know that this is not IPOB. Tell them that’s what I said.” – Nnamdi Kanu; August 27, 2017. Source: saharareporters.com/2017/08/27/nnamdi-kanu-anyone-who-tries-arrest-me-biafraland-will-die-thecable/
6. “Nothing has ever worked in the ‘zoo’ and nothing will ever function properly.” – Nnamdi Kanu; June 20, 2017. Source: thenationonline.net/zoo-called-nigeria/
7. “No Igbo man should attend any Church where the pastor is a Yoruba man, they are criminals and fools.” – Nnamdi Kanu; September 29, 2017. Source: dailypost/2017/09/29/biafra-nnamdi-kanu-terrorist-asked-ipob-members-kill-yorubas-group/
8. “From today, June 6, 2017, when this proclamation is signed, the North, a critical player in the Nigerian project, hereby declares that it will no longer be disposed to coexisting with the Igbos and shall take definite steps to end the partnership by pulling out of the current federal arrangement.” – Arewa youths on June 6, 2017. Source: saharareporters.com/2017/06/06/northern-youths-declare-war-Igbos/
9. “They are killing my people in public, after killing my people they want to try me in private? That person is mad. I won’t allow it. Tell Buhari that’s what I said; that he is mad. He cannot jail me. He cannot jail me. He is a mad man.” – Nnamdi Kanu on December 14, 2016. Source: opera.pulse.ng/news/local/nnamdi-kanu-tell-buhari-he-is-mad-ipob-leader-says-video-id5894478.html/
10. “I don’t know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room.” – President Muhammadu Buhari on October 14, 2016. Source: punchng.com/wife-belongs-kitchen-buhari/
11. “I hope you have a copy of the election results. The constituents, for example, who gave me 97% [of the vote] cannot, in all honesty, be treated on some issues with constituencies that gave me 5%” – President Muhammadu Buhari on July 23, 2015. Source: punchng.com/buharis-presidential-salvos-from-foreign-lands/
12. “Our people no dey born shildren wey dem no fit count” – Patience Jonathan on March 3, 2015. Source: www.vanguardonlinenews.com/

13. “Anybody that come and tell you changes, stone that person... What you did not do in 1985, is it now that old age has caught up with you that you want to come and change... You cannot change rather you will turn back to a baby” Wife of former President, Patience Jonathan. Sources: The Nation Newspaper of Sunday, 15th March, 2015
14. “Buhari would likely die in office if elected, recall that Murtala Muhammed, Sani Abacha and Umaru Yar’Adua, all former heads of state from the North West like Buhari, had died in office”. The Governor of Ekiti State, Peter Ayodele Fayose. Sources: January 19, 2015 This Day Newspaper
15. “On Saturday, if anyone of you, I swear in the name of God, goes against my wish that Ambode will be the next governor of Lagos state, the person is going to die inside this water... For the Igbos and others in Lagos, they should go where the Oba of Lagos heads to...” Oba Akiolu of Lagos. Source: ThisDay Newspaper, 4th April 2015.
16. “2015 is more than do-or-die. You are a man and I am a man, we are going to meet at the battlefield” Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari. Source: *News Express 3rd May, 2014.*
17. “If they contest (Northerners) they are wasting their time. He who pays the piper will dictate the tune. We own them. We are feeding them. They are parasites. A beggar has no choice... They are beggars and parasites”
Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari. Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/12/north-ungrateful-parasites-asari-dokubo>).
18. “Muslims, vote for Buhari. It is a sin to support a non-Muslim”. An Islamic cleric, Ima Sadiq. Source: Twitter handle, Saturday, 27th December, 2014.
19. “Those who vote for Jonathan and the PDP in 2015 will be considered an enemy of the north”. Northern Elders Forum. Source: *Vanguard*, 15 October 2014.
20. “It is going to be rig and roast. We are prepared not to go to court but drive them out” Asiwaju Bola Tinubu. Source: Tell Magazine of June 7, 2014.