UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS,
LAGOS, NIGERIA

BOOK OF
PROCEEDINGS

FOR THE
10th UNILAG ANNUAL RESEARCH
CONFERENCE & FAIR

Theme:
Implementing New Research
Strategies for National
Transformation

Date: 24th - 26th, November, 2015
Venue: Multipurpose Hall,
University of Lagos,
Akoka, Lagos.
BOOK OF PROCEEDING

FOR THE

10th UNILAG ANNUAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE AND FAIR

THEME:
IMPLEMENTING NEW RESEARCH STRATEGIES
FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION
November 24-26, 2015

BOOK OF PROCEEDING

VOLUME 1 – Humanities:
(Arts, Business Administration, Education, Law & Social Sciences)
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PREFACE

BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS-10TH UNILAG RESEARCH CONFERENCE & FAIR
NOVEMBER 24-26, 2015

It is a great pleasure to welcome everyone to the 10th UNILAG Annual Research Conference & fair with the theme Implementing New Research Strategies for National Transformation. The current development of modern science and technology combined with management on social and economic activities are contributing more solutions to national empowerment and development. This year’s conference continues its tradition of being the premier forum for presentation of research results and experience reports on leading edge issues.

The conference will provide a major interdisciplinary forum for presenting new approaches from relevant areas of the sciences and humanities to foster integration of the latest developments in scientific research into applications, and to facilitate technology transfer from well-tested ideas into practical products.

Researchers, Practitioners, regulatory agents,—decision-making officials, consultants, and vendors will all benefit from the—opportunity to exchange information on recent research trends and to examine ongoing research programs and promote effective networking, coordination and cooperation channels between researchers, government and organizations.
All participants are encouraged to attend the keynote and plenary sessions. These valuable and insightful talks can and will guide a better understanding in the future of research results.

Professor Christopher Allan Shisanya, the Dean, School of Humanities & Social Sciences; Kenyatta University, Kenya will deliver the keynote address on Implementing New Research Strategies for National Transformation as well as the plenary on Climate Change and National Transformation in Nigeria.

Other Plenary Speakers are:
1. Professor Charles O. Esimone - DVC (Academics & Research) Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka
2. Professor G.O.G. Awosanya, Provost of Lagos State University College of Medicine, Lagos
3. Engr. Dr. Emmanuel M. Adigio – Associate Professor in Mechanical Engineering and Deputy Director Technical, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.
4. Professor Ayo V. Atsenuwa, Head, Department of Public Law, Faculty of Law, University of Lagos
5. Dr. Gbolahan Gbadamosi, Business School, Bournemouth University, UK

This year's conference has also featured a workshop on BASIC CONCEPTS OF PROPOSAL WRITING & GRANT MANAGEMENT on the second day of the event.

The call for papers attracted submissions from all over Nigeria, Africa, Europe, and the United States. The program committee received a total of 331 full papers and abstracts for review; accepted 190 full publications for Oral presentations and 110 abstracts for Poster presentation from the Sciences and Humanities discipline. The oral presentations are to run concurrently in the five (5) parallel sessions.

The following publications are available for participants:

A book of Abstracts containing all accepted abstracts submitted (300), including the abstracts of accepted full papers and a CD containing Two volumes of Books of Conference Proceedings in Pdf format are made available for participant.


Volume 2: for Sciences: 109 Papers from the Faculties of Basic Medical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Dental Sciences, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Pharmacy and Sciences.

Putting together the conference has always been a team effort. All authors are well appreciated for providing the content of the program. Sincere appreciation to all members of the Conference Planning Committee (CPC); the abstracts and program sub-committee; and the reviewers who worked very hard in reviewing papers and
providing feedback for authors. Finally, the University of Lagos Central Research Committee (CRC) led by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics & Research (Professor Babajide I. Alo FNAS) for providing leadership in the sustenance of research and scholarship and Congratulations to the University's management as backbone of the conference sponsor, and our generous corporate supporters.

There is a conference proceeding but the question is what's next? This matter has always been raised. I think it should be our reflection now -- what's next? This conference is a success because of everyone's efforts and participation.

Thank you very much!

Professor Olukemi A. Odukoya FPSN

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CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION: AN ECO-LINGUISTIC STUDY OF PRINT MEDIA REPORTS ON OIL EXPLORATION IN THE NIGER DELTA

Matthew A. E.
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ABSTRACT.
The study focuses on environmental issues as reported in the media. The rate of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region has rendered the land barren even though the region is blessed with rich mineral resources, those resources have been exploited to the disadvantage of the people who are predominantly agrarian. The level of oil exploration has left the Niger Delta people with no option of any means of livelihood. These environmental issues have been widely reported in the media. The focus of this study therefore is to critically examine those reports from the perspective of language by applying the theoretical principles of Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis to explicate the discourses raised. We apply Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis as a theoretical model in this study because it deals with the application of Critical Discourse Analysis to texts about the environment and environmentalism, in order to reveal hidden assumptions and hidden messages and comment on their effectiveness in achieving environmental aims. The model implies intervention by providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged by exposing the hidden things, since they are not evident for the individuals involved and because of this, they cannot be fought against. Critical Discourse Analysis reveals how texts are constructed so that particular and Potentially indoctrinating' perspectives can be expressed.

Keywords: Environmental Issues, Climate Change Niger Delta, Oil exploration, print, Media Reports, Eco-Linguistics, CDA.
INTRODUCTION

—The news media select events for reporting according to a complex set of criteria of newsworthiness; so news is not simply that which happens, but that which can be regarded and presented as newsworthy...the more newsworthiness criteria an event satisfies, the more likely it is to be reported‖ (Fowler 1991: 12).

This study presents a discourse-analytical approach to media reports on the level of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis which Teun van Dijk observes, —emphasizes the obviously. As a contrast to this view, Fowler observes that: —The news media select events for reporting according to a complex set of criteria of newsworthiness; so news is not simply that which happens, but that which can be regarded and presented as newsworthy...the more newsworthiness criteria an event satisfies, the more likely it is to be reported‖ (1991: 12). The theories and methods of the new interdisciplinary field of discourse analysis may be brought to bear in a more systematic and explicit account of the structures of media messages to demonstrate the points of convergence in the above postulations. Since discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary enterprise, it is able to relate structural account to various properties of the cognitive and sociocultural context. Discourse analysis emerged as a new transdisciplinary field of study between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s in such disciplines as anthropology, ethnography, microsociology, cognitive and social psychology, poetics, rhetoric, stylistics, linguistics, semiotics, and other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences interested in the systematic study of the structures, functions, and processing of text and talk (see van Dijk, 1985b). In order to limit discussion of the vast domain of discourse-analytical media research, we shall focus on the study of news as reported in the press with regards to environmental despoliation in the Niger Delta region.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Niger Delta region is ravaged by crises emanating from oil exploration. The crises became pronounced precisely On 23 February 1966, when Isaac Boro of the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS) and a group of 159 youth, took up arms against the Nigerian state as a result of the perceived injustice, marginalization, and political exclusion suffered by the Ijaws and other Niger Delta indigenes in the immediate post-colonial Nigeria. Isaac Boro led a revolt against the Nigerian state when he proclaimed the Niger Delta Peoples Republic and launched a guerrilla war against the federal government. He established the first militia group known as Niger Delta Volunteer Force that engaged the armed forces of Nigeria in a bloody battle (Ojakorotu 2006). This process marked the beginning of militancy in the Niger Delta. Several years of oppressive military dictatorships worsened the plight of the Niger Delta and led to the emergence of the late Ken Saro-Wiwa_s led Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). Despite the commitment of MOSOP to the principle of nonviolence, a well-armed military outfit was expressly formed to repress the protests organized by MOSOP and the Ogoni people, and numerous people were killed in the process.

Nonviolent approaches to curbing violence in the Niger Delta failed with the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa. The federal government and the Multi National Oil
Corporations could not be persuaded to proactively engage the Niger Delta militants on the salient issues of environmental despoliation, degradation, neglect, politics of exclusion and other forms of injustices imposed on them since the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantities at Oloibiri, the present Bayelsa state in 1956. Consequently, youths in the region resorted to the formation of armed militant groups for the purpose of advancing the cause of the Niger Delta people. Their targets were the oil pipelines with the aim of drawing government attention to their plight. The Human Rights Watch writing on the level of militancy in the Niger Delta region says: The successful return of Nigeria to a democratic dispensation on 29 May 1999 marked a major turning point in the subsequent brazenness of youth militancy in the Niger Delta. In addition, politicians…fanned the flames of youth militancy by the recruitment and supply of arms to militants, gangs and cults for the purpose of rigging of elections, intimidation, harassment and outright assassination of political opponents. Principal amongst them were Asari Dokubo and Tom Ateke’s groups, which were obviously sponsored by the Peter Odili’s government in Rivers state. However, when Dokubo and Odili fell out after the 2003 elections, he quickly turned to the art of populism by transforming his followers into NDPVF, which adopted an overtly political rhetoric, identifying itself in opposition to the perceived marginalization and neglect of the Niger Delta and framing its activities in terms of strident political demands (HRW, 2008: 57). Although Asari Dokubo was arrested by the federal government, the arrest did not yield any positive result. It rather led to the formation of a deadlier and faceless group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which claimed its mandate was to unite militant groups in the region, embark on a systematic strategy of disruption of Multi National Oil Companies’ infrastructure and activities, and the kidnapping of foreign oil workers as an extra legal method and bargaining weapon for negotiation, and redressing the political/socio-economic dehumanizing conditions of the Niger Delta. Some of the resultant effects of militancy in the region include: Vandalism of oil facilities, Hostage taking for ransoms and Oil bunkering among other forms of criminality.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Over the years, it has been discovered that language can hardly be separated from the culture of a people-environment inclusive. Language experts have therefore focused on ensuring that they come up with a suitable way of analysing language in relation to environmental issues. This culminated in the branch of linguistic study known as Eco linguistics. This aspect of language study through the efforts of MAK Halliday emerged in the 1990s as a new paradigm of linguistic research which takes into account not only the social context in which language is embedded, but also the ecological context in which societies are embedded. Halliday’s paper titled “New ways of Meaning: the challenge to applied linguistics” paves the way for linguistic consideration of the ecological context and consequences of language. Halliday tried to make linguistics relevant to the issues and concerns of the 21st century, particularly the widespread destruction of the ecosystems. Using the issues of ‘economic growth’, as examples, he described how the orientation of the English language with regard to unmarked terms such as large, grow, tall, and good gives growth a positive aspect, despite the negative ecological consequences. Taking off from this Hallidayan postulation, the field of Eco linguistics has developed considerably, primarily in the direction of analysing the ecological impact of specific discourses rather than languages in general. Language & Ecology Research Forum which specialises in fronting for a balance in the management of the environment posits that: “Eco linguistics examines the influence of language on the lifesustaining relationships of humans with each other, with other organisms and with the natural environment. The forum observes that …academic enquiry within this aspect of language study ranges from the impact of advertising discourse in encouraging ecologically damaging consumption to the power of nature poetry to encourage respect for the natural world. Approaching language study from this position can be taken
From two dimensions: 'eco-critical discourse analysis' and 'linguistic ecology'. While critically examining the main approaches to be adopted in analysing language from the perspective of the environment, Derni (2008) quoting —Bang and Døør observes that there is provision for a model to explain the environmental constitution of human language (qtd in Bundsgaard and Steffensen, 2000). This model, based on the three dimensionality of social praxis, depicts three types of dimensions, an *ideo-logical*, a *socio-logical*, and a *bio-logical*. The first dimension involves individual mental, cognitive, and psychological aspects. The second one includes collections of individuals ranging from the family, which is the basis of social organisation, to include members of neighbourhood, speech communities, and whole societies. The last dimension is about 'biological collectivity' and the coexistence of human beings with other species (Bundsgaard and Steffensen, 2000). Indeed, the structuralist approach to linguistic systems makes use of the ideological dimension and rejects the sociological and the biological. The sociolinguistic paradigm in its turn tackles in addition to the ideological aspect a sociological scope and excludes the biological aspect. The template presented below as expatiated by Bang and Døør paints a clear picture of how Eco linguistic perspective, is primarily described as an overall approach where the three dimensions are incorporated.

From the diagram, we observe that there is a connection between ideologies, sociology, biological issues encapsulated within an environmental setting. The three concepts interact within the human habitat for easy and effective realization of the ideals. They are intertwined and therefore inseparable. This proves that language functions within an environment and not in a vacuum. Because our focus in this study is on climate change and environment degradation from the perspective of language use in media reportage, we adopted the Eco-critical discourse analytical model.

**ECO-CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

As Stibbe 2012, Harré et al. 1999 observe, *Eco-critical discourse analysis includes, but is not limited to the application of critical discourse analysis to texts about the environment and environmentalism, in order to reveal hidden assumptions and hidden messages and comment on the effectiveness of these in achieving environmental aims*. The approach however includes analysis of any discourse which has potential consequences for the future of ecosystems, such as neoliberal economic discourse and discursive constructions of consumerism, gender; politics, agriculture and nature (see Goatly 2000, Stibbe 2004). Ecocritical discourse analysis does not just focus on exposing potentially damaging ideologies, but also searches for discursive representations which can contribute to a more ecologically sustainable society. It also incorporates approaches such as Eco semiotics (Selvamony 2007) which has to do with the study of signs and symbols. The study therefore adopts Critical Discourse Analysis as a theoretical model for analysing the data. The aspect of CDA adopted here is that of Norman Fairclough which he says is "a contribution to the general raising of consciousness of exploitative social relations, through focusing upon language" (1989: 4, Fairclough, 1992, 1993,
1995a, 1995b; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). For Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), CDA "brings social science and linguistics … together within a single theoretical and analytical framework, setting up a dialogue between them" (6). Fairclough worked closely with the Hallidayan theory of SFT before arriving at the branch of CDA which he says is most acceptable in analysing issues of deprivation, injustice and power relations. SFT therefore forms the foundation upon which CDA is built, (see Fowler et. al., 1979; Fowler, 1991; Hodge & Kress, 1979). Fairclough's approach also draws upon a number of critical social theorists, such as Foucault (i.e. concept of orders of discourse), Gramsci (concept of hegemony), Habermas (i.e. concept of colonization of discourses), among others (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) posit that CDA has a particular contribution to make. They argue that, "the past two decades or so have been a period of profound economic social transformation on a global scale…although these changes are due to particular actions by people the changes have been perceived as "part of nature" (p. 4). That is, changes and transformations have been perceived as natural and not due to people's causal actions. The recent economic and social changes, according to Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), "are to a significant degree associated transformations in the language, and discourse" (p. 4), thus, CDA can help by theorizing transformations and creating an awareness "of what is, how it has come to be, and what it might become, on the basis of which people may be able to make and remake their lives” (p. 4). With such an objective in mind, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) claim that CDA of a communicative interaction sets out to show that the semiotic and linguistic features of interaction are systematically connected with what is going on socially, and what is going on socially is indeed going on partly or wholly semiotically or linguistically. This means that, CDA systematically charts relations of transformation between the symbolic and non-symbolic, between discourse and the non-discursive, (p. 113). In this approach of CDA, there are three analytical focuses in analysing any communicative event: text (e.g. a news report), discourse practice (e.g. the process of production and consumption), and sociocultural practice (e.g. social and cultural structures which give rise to the communicative event) (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 57; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 113).

**DATA COLLECTION**

This study makes use of the purposive method of data collection. Through this method we generated thirteen (13) news headlines and over leads from three newspapers published in Nigeria with topical issues on environmental mismanagement in the Niger Delta region. These newspapers are: The Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Trust. The choice of these media houses is based on purposive methodology. In terms of data analysis, our approach is both qualitative and quantitative; an approach which has to do with the interpretation of the content of data through the systematic classification process of identifying and describing themes or patterns that emerge from such data and subjecting them to numerical analysis.
DATA PRESENTATION/INTERPRETATION

Coalition underlines environmental emergency in the Niger Delta Jun 9, 2013 – Vanguard. The above headline as demonstrated by the Vanguard newspaper describes an appalling situation in the Niger Delta region and calls for an urgent attention to rescue the situation. **Text1**

Nigerian way of life under threat from pollution Jun 3, 2013 – Vanguard. Again the vanguard sees danger in the above headline—a source of danger that points to extinction of a particular set of people if attention is not focused on the rate of despoliation and cautious steps taken to arrest the ugly situation. **Text2**

The Health Effects of Oil Contamination Feb 4, 2013 – Guardian. Here there is a description of the challenges that come with pollution from the perspective of health. There is a saying that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation but here we are confronted with a situation where the people’s health is deliberately put at stake through oil exploration. **Text3**

Extent of Environmental Contamination and Threats to Human Health in Ogoniland Aug 5, 2011 – Guardian **Text4** Again the report of UNEP as reported above is in the form of a state of emergency. It poses a threat to the human race and demands urgent attention of government or those involved to address the issues or be ready to face the repercussions.

Crude oil pollution raises cancer risk among Nigerians Dec 14, 2013. The implication of the above headline is that more Nigerians are at the risk of developing different types of cancer due to exposure to crude oil pollutants. This means that Nigerians are at an increased risk of developing cancer due to exposure to toxic chemicals from crude oil pollution. **Text5**

Niger delta oil spills clean-up will take 30 years, says UN Aug 5, 2011 Guardian. As reported by the Guardian newspaper, the devastating effects of the oil spills in the Niger delta will cost $1 billion to rectify and take up to 30 years to clean up. That headline is substantiated by the report of The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) which announced that Shell and other oil firms systematically contaminated a 1,000 sq km (386 sq mile) area of Ogoniland, in the Niger delta, with disastrous consequences for human health and wildlife. The implication is that Nigerians had paid a high price for the economic growth brought by the oil industry. **Text6**

Fishing in Nigeria - an Endangered Occupation Dec 15, 2010. Daily Trust. The people of the Niger Delta region are predominantly agrarian but the headline above tends to nullify
their occupation by pointing to the fact that their occupation is as it were a risky business occasioned by the level of environmental degradation in the region. This means that the possibility of existing in such an environment is slim and dangerous. **Text7**

*Up in Smoke - Nigeria’s continued reliance on gas flaring.* **Vanguard.** As reported by Vanguard, the expression —up in smokel is horrific and threatening. It poses a dangerous and unsafe situation and demands an urgent attention in the area. This threat emanates from gas flaring. This time the impact is not directly on the trees, grasses or other environmental issues but on the atmospheric condition of the Niger Delta region. This also points to the fact that the problem is holistic: the land, the water and even the air none is safe. **Text8**

Nigerian villagers reject shell oil spill compensation offer Saturday, 14 September 2013-Daily Trust. The above headline as pointed out by Daily Trust newspaper a Kaduna based newspaper means the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region refused to accept the offer given to them by their oppressors who destroy their means of livelihood. But there is more to this reportage due to the use of the word —villagersl which implies permittivity. The term as used in the Nigerian parlance refers to those who lack the basic knowledge of urbanization. But the report contradicted itself by going further to say …..**Rejected an offer of compensation from Royal Dutch Shell for damage done to their livelihoods by oil spills from pipelines operated by the company.** **Text10**

Niger delta oil spill victims reject 'derisory' Shell compensation offer Sep 17, 2013 – Guardian. When we compare this headline with that of Daily trust as shown above, there are ideological differences in terms of reportage. Taking a closer look at the use of the words we see the Guardian making use of the expression —Niger delta oil spill victimsl as compared to the Daily Trust use of the word “villagers”. The ideological import is that of the derogatory use of the word “village” in place of the word “victims” as used by the Guardian. Again daily trust is guilty of derogatory usage of terms when the word —local is used in the expression —Shell accepts responsibility for the Bodo spills but the two sides disagree about the volume spilt and the number of —local people” who lost their livelihoods as a result. Who are people? and who are local people? Is it a deliberate use of a word? A derogatory expression? Or an attempt to downplay the importance of the —victimsl? Or —villagersl? The Guardian’s report is succinct and straight to the point. It gives the main cause of the spill as … from rusting Shell pipelines…. **Text11**

Oil spill from Agip’s Brass Terminal pollutes Atlantic Ocean Dec 2, 2013 - *Residents forced to stop fishing.* The headline above can be taken to mean that the despoliation and degradation of environment is beyond the Niger Delta issue' it also extends to the outside world-the Atlantic Ocean. The report is closely followed by a rider which states unequivocally that
even the residents could not stand the risk as they are forced to flee from their domain. **Text12**

**FG Loss 4trillion to militants Daily Trust.** The reportage here points at the issue of counting the cost of negligence, ineptitude and failure to take charge of the pressing needs of the people. As the Federal Government fails to curb the issues of environmental degradation, the people are forced by circumstances to indulge in what majority term —criminality a term the —boys rejected and continue to reject. Again this report is from the daily trust newspaper which is based in the north. **Text13**

**DATA ANALYSIS: THE USE OF LANGUAGE IN THE DATA**

**Plain Headlines**

A news headline according to Chiluwa (2007) is the title of news story that summarizes the entire story. The main headline is usually on the front page of a magazine or newspaper. Usually printed in bold letters, headlines summarize the main points of the story. They occupy more space than the texts they refer to and where more significant words or coinages exist, they are still printed bolder than others or highlighted in italics. This is in order to stress a particular word or idea. Words on the headline are usually short and crisp. Wording is determined by ideas to be expressed, technology of printing and the kind of audience associated with the paper or magazine. Technology of printing includes choices in terms of style availability of space and accompanying photographs. Other criteria include simplicity, informality and impact (Freeborn et al, 1986). The headlines selected here are all simple statements outwardly. They describe the situation of the oil exploration in the Niger Delta region as reported by the media houses. They might seem to be plain statement but on a closer look and through the application of CDA, the study uncovers the hidden ideologies behind such statements. We selected those that treat topical issues as seen in the stories. These issues are: environment, spillage and economy/financial issues.

**LEXICAL ITEMS IN THE HEADLINES**

Lexical choices made by man especially in writing form important aspects of "personal and cultural identity, as well as being the carrier of knowledge" (Askeland & Payne, 2006, p. 736). Rogers and colleagues (2005) are of the opinion that —language indexes, expresses, and constitutes social relations, while at the same time challenging social relationsl. Following this view, language can be said to be "dialogic, intertextual and historically based" (376). Considering social and cultural aspects of language Bell (1997) mentions that "language constitutes social reality as well as reflects it" (Wang, 2009:753). Carrying out a study in the area of environmental issues from the point of view of media reportage can be viewed as a pivotal point in Critical Discourse Analysis as Popp (2006) opines that "media language choice is an institutionalized means of framing reality" (p. 6). Therefore, framing social, political, cultural, economic, and ideological realities highly depends on the language use of the mass media in general, and printed news media in particular. Our focus in this segment of the study therefore is to examine those lexical items that have been used frequently in the data to try and explore the ideological background of the texts.
LEXICAL ITEMS DENOTING ENVIRONMENTAL DESPOILATION IN THE DATA


(2). Nigerian way of life under threat from pollution Jun 3, 2013 – Vanguard

(3). The Health Effects of Oil Contamination Feb 4, 2013 – Guardian


(5). Crude oil pollution raises cancer risk among Nigerians Dec 14, 2013

(6). Niger Delta oil spills clean-up will take 30 years, says UN Aug 5, 2011 Guardian


(8). Up in Smoke - Nigeria’s continued reliance on gas flaring-Vanguard

(9). Nigerian villagers reject shell oil spill compensation offer Saturday, 14 September 2013-Daily Trust.

(10). Niger Delta oil spill victims reject 'derisory' Shell compensation offer Sep 17, 2013 – Guardian


(12). FG Loss 4trillion to militants Daily Trust.

INTERPRETATION OF KEY LEXICAL ITEMS IN THE DATA

There are certain lexical items that have been foregrounded in the data. Our focus on lexical foregrounding is premised on Fowler (1966:16) opinion that: Lexis is the level of linguistic form at which variables can be treated with the greatest freedom and are of significance for stylistic study. Bloomfield (1933) and Ajulo (1994:139) agree with the above assertion when Ajulo, quoting Bloomfield lends credence to the claims that: The description of a language begins with phonology; when the phonology of a language has been established there remains the task of telling what meanings are attached of the several phonetic forms. This phase of description is semantics which ordinarily is divided into syntax and lexicon. Lexis and semantics are so intricately linked that they can hardly be separated from each other in the description of a text. Commenting on the central role played by lexical items in linking up with the rest of the text in a linguistic system, Halliday (1978:79) says: The semantic system is an interface between the rest of the linguistic system and some higher order of symbolic system. It is projected unto or realised by the lexicogrammatical system. Based on the above assertion, we shall carry out a scale count of some key fore grounded words in the data. This feature of analysis according to Olaosun (2005:93) helps to identify certain features of a language that are prominent linguistically in a text. This process also evaluates the use of lexical items in terms of their relevance to the theme of the text. Though, this type of analysis has been criticised by most scholars who claim that texts cannot be reduced to mere counting; Ullman (1965), Fowler (1966), Halliday (1973) and Crystal (1983) argued that the number of occurrences of lexical items must be of relevance because numerical data on language is significant during analysis as a rough statistical indication of frequencies could be helpful to check the analyst’s opinion that some features are prominent in the text. There are many lexical items that are prominent in the text in terms of frequency which work toward unification of the text by foregrounding the
message. We have selected six lexical items for analysis because they capture the over-all idea and meaning of the data. These items are:

i. Environment
ii. Contamination
iii. Compensation
iv. Gas flaring
v. Oil
vi. Pollution

Figure 2. Tabular representation of foregrounded lexical items in the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contamination</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas flaring</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Percentage distribution/interpretation of each lexical item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>11/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contamination</td>
<td>17/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>8/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas flaring</td>
<td>10/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>30/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>20/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total percentage distribution** 360°

**INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

The interpretation of the above diagrams demonstrates the fact that the site of the struggle, conflict and militancy in the Niger Delta is oil which takes the largest percentage of the discourse in the data with 30% and an average frequency occurrence of 112.5%. Closely followed in that scale is the issue of environmental pollution with an average of 20% with a percentage occurrence of 75%. Contamination of the Niger Delta environment ranks third with an occurrence of 17% with a percentage distribution of 63%. Gas flaring which is a major issue in the Niger Delta region ranks fourth with an average occurrence of 10 with a percentage distribution of 37.5%. The focus on complaint about the environment and the consequences of the rate of oil exploration and environmental degradation ranks fifth with an occurrence of 11% and a percentage distribution of 41.25%. The least occurrence in the scale is the issue of compensation. Because the residents of the area are not given any consideration, the issue of compensation is relegated to the background. Its occurrence is in the region of 8% with a frequency distribution of just 30%. The persistent occurrence of the word —oil in all of the reports
considered in this study is anchored on the fact that the focus is on the product and not on the inhabitants of the environment. This is clearly demonstrated where the least attention paid to the corporate social responsibility of the multinational oil companies that operate in the region as can be found in the data. This kind of data analysis is in conformity with Halliday’s (1973: 119) assertion that patterns of **stylistic prominence** may reflect thesis or themes or other aspects of the meaning of lexical items in a given context. The foregrounding of the key words brings to prominence the urgency in the demand for a habitable environment, the need for equity, fair play, justice and above all the consideration of the sanctity of human life where the environment is given adequate protection for the survival of the human race in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

**CONCLUSION**

This paper focuses on the application of the theoretical concept of Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis to describe and interpret the newspaper reports of some media houses on the issues of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region. The study discovers that the choice of language especially in the reportage of the Niger Delta issues is influenced by the demands of the level of degradation and the need for urgent attention in the area. The predominance of certain lexical items appears to down play the need for preservation of the environment to the expense of the livelihood of the residents of the region. Though the reports are described from the perspective of linguistics, they tend to point to the fact that the inability of the authorities to call certain elements to order also fans the ember of militancy and violence in the region. Through the use of certain lexical items, the study discovers that the issue of oil takes prominence while the idea of compensating the inhabitants is hardly given any attention. We believe that if the Niger Delta environment is given adequate preservation and the people adequately compensated, the issue of climate change will be effectively managed and the level of militancy in the Niger Delta will be minimised if not eradicated.

**REFERENCES**


2004.

