
A Functional Linguistic Perspective of Language and Insecurity in Governor Ortom’s Speech on the Killings at Abagana IDP Camp

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Abstract

This study, from a functional linguistic perspective, examines language and insecurity via an impromptu speech of Governor Ortom on the Killings at the Abagana IDP camp delivered 28th Wednesday, March 2021. The study aims at two things. First, it examines the language of the speech through the structures unfurling how insecurity has become a major concern in Benue state. Second, it undrapes the linguistic features used in foregrounding this concern. Findings unveil that binary opposition, mood, modality, transitivity, and deictic references are linguistic features expended by Governor Ortom to achieve different meanings. While binary opposition tends to foreground intentional and unethical acts levelled against the people of Benue state; modality tends to compel certain obligations to stop this act. An interrogative is invested rhetorically to implicitly justify an action taken rather than elicit an answer. An imperative is utilized to achieve warning, and transitivity choices that are metaphorically pointy are employed as statements of straightforward facts that thrust the ideological current of the discourse. The study deployed both tabular and narrative analysis to enhance the meaning of the discourse. Tables were used in most cases not just to indicate how roles were realized via transitivity processes, but when there is a

role shift, notably, in a passive structure. The speech was, first transcribed into a written form out of which thirteen excerpts as data were purposively selected and their structural patterns examined using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics approach.

Keywords: insecurity, Governor Ortom, Abagana IDP camp, ideology, Systemic Functional Linguistics

1. Introduction

The study is impelled, first, by the spontaneity and responsiveness of Governor Ortom's impromptu speech or address at the Abagana IDP camp within a group context; and second, how language has been credibly deployed in the speech to address the insecurity situation in Benue state. Our definition of credibility evolves from the spontaneous and responsive nature of the address which certainly accentuates originality, unlike a rehearsed speech where the language may have been intentionally patterned as a result of a great deal of time spent in thinking and constructing ideas.

Insecurity as it were in the contemporary sense is a national threat that should not be spared but completely eradicated. Today, in Nigeria, it has found its way into our society as an indispensable necessity in form of terrorism, banditry, militancy, inter-tribal war and so on. The results are obvious, despite several concerted efforts made by each successive government to nib this hydra-headed problem in the bud and exterminate it (Edem and Aluya, 2017). The Fulani-Herdsmen and Farmers conflict is a prototype of a grievous insurrection that has bedevilled the country over the years without a solution in sight. Their militancy has become a key security concern for the nation. In addition to its religious colouration, the farmer-herdsmen unrest has been attributed as basically economical. This

involves the Fulani versus Tiv farmers, Fulani versus Jukun farmers, Fulani versus the Birom and so on.

The killing at the Abagana IDP camp by bandits seems to be a furtherance of the Fulani-Tiv farmers' unrest and Governor Ortom's Impromptu speech is a spontaneous reaction to the event. The primary function of language is communication. Thus, the study attempts to unveil what Governor Ortom tries to do with language and the devices deployed in doing it. This is a functional approach to language. According to Dik (1981, p.3), a language is first conceptualized as a tool of social interaction intentionally deployed for the establishment of communicative relationships among human beings. It is from this perspective one attempts to illustrate the instrumentality of language to what people do and achieve with it in social interaction. As such, functional linguistics is primarily interested in explaining language phenomena. This is the reason SFL initiates the idea that language comprises 'a system of meaning', which affords a speaker an unlimited choice of ways of creating meanings (Bloor and Bloor, 2013, p. 3). Therefore, from the perspective of Armstrong, and Ferguson (2010), when we explore how language contributes to the construal of different kinds of social interactions, we tend to further comprehend functional communication.

2. Methodology

The study attempts a functional linguistic analysis of language and insecurity in Samuel Ortom's impromptu speech delivered on 28 Wednesday, April 2021 at the Abagana IDP camp. First, the speech is transcribed into a written form out of which thirteen excerpts as data are purposively collected and analysed, using the theoretical approach of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL). The study deploys both narrative and tabular analysis. Tables

are used, first, to show how different roles in the selected texts are realized via transitivity; and second, to showcase when there is a role shift, especially, in a passive structure. With this, a passive voice is indicated as a significant linguistic choice.

The study has embraced SFL because of its interest in how language is deployed in a social context and the choices available for the speaker to make meaning in that context. With this, the study attempts to substantiate how insecurity is meaningfully construed by governor Ortom as a national threat via the choices of mood, modality, transitivity, deictic references, and opposition in the discourse.

2. Theoretical Framework

One of the hallmarks of functional linguistics is its emphasis on communication as the prime purpose of language. In other words, how people expend language to successfully communicate meaning becomes an essential parameter. With this, the relationship between language and its function cannot be severed since functional linguistics sees language and its elements as essential factors in understanding linguistic processes and organization. In other words, the language of any text, like the speech text under consideration, can best be examined and realized through the functions that the elements in the speech text are inclined to perform. This is why the concept 'functional' is deployed in functional linguistics to illustrate the method which ascertains syntactic categories in terms of their communicative functions. There are so many functional approaches to linguistic categories such as Foley and Valin's (1984) *Functional Syntax*, Dik's (1981) *Functional Grammar*, Van Valin's (1993) *Role and Reference Grammar*, Hengvenel and Mackenzie's (2008) *Functional Discourse Grammar*, Halliday's *Functional Grammar* (1984)

amongst others are characteristics of diverse functional approaches central to the study of grammatical forms and functions.

Halliday's SFL for instance is a formal grammar of description. It tends to describe how language in social interaction is encoded through diverse metafunctions or linguistic features that initiate the creation of diverse meanings in discourse. These linguistic features range from *ideational* to *interpersonal* and *textual*. However, they are semantically connected to three contextual variables such as *field*, *tenor* and *mode* respectively. The ideational has to do with the field of discourse. It conveys a text or clause as experience (experiential meaning) and the sequences of experiences (logical meaning). The interpersonal relates to the tenor and it sees a text or clause as an exchange. Finally, the textual is concerned with the mode, which indicates how the text or clause is patterned or constructed into a meaningful discourse via context (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Hunston & Thompson, 2000). The interest in this study is to show how these meta-functions as linguistic choices entwine at some level with other linguistic choices in the discourse to enhance readers' cognitive understanding of Governor Ortom's speech on insecurity.

3. Analysis and Discussion of Speech Excerpts

The interest of the study is in the language patterns of the speech and its communicative functions; the purpose of communication. What the governor or speaker intentionally or unintentionally tries to convey to the audience on insecurity matters bordering Benue state. To this end, the study attempts to analyze the speech from the following sub-headings: (i) Linguistic choices that allege the killings in Benue state as intentional (ii) Linguistic patterns that foreground prejudices and (iii) Linguistic patterns that call for action against the state of insecurity.

(i) Linguistic Choices that allege the killings in Benue state as intentional

1. For several years, we have been calling on the federal government to take proactive steps to address this matter; they have refused to do so.

Two basic ideas run through the language patterns of text 1. First, the incessant calls made by the people of Benue state for preemptive steps to stem insecurity, and second, the federal government's (henceforth FG) refusal of the calls. These basic ideas are substantiated in the discourse via the circumstantial adjunct and temporal deixis *'/For several years/'* and the referential element *'/they/'* respectively. These linguistic choices which operate in a larger declarative mood choice become pointing expressions according to Carter, Goddard, Reah, Sanger, & Bowring (1997) which direct the attention of the audience to the circumstance of the event and the referent or participants involved in the event; thereby, from a structural sense, foregrounding the speaker's claim that the killings in Benue state are intentional. This is why Bloor and Bloor (2011) assert that linguistic choice is accessible to a speaker at the point of every speech depending on the environment. Halliday (1985) uses the term *'system'* to describe the series of linguistic alternatives or choices available to a speaker of the language to make meaning at any point in time. According to Halliday's SFL, the tables below convey the world of the text the governor is describing.

Table 1: Declarative Mood Structure 1

For several years	we	have	been calling	on the federal government	to take proactive steps to address this matter
Cir	Sayer	Proc: Verbal		Receiver	Verbiage
A	S	F	P	C	C
Topical Theme [marked]	Topical Theme [unmarked]	Rheme			

Table 2: Declarative Mood Structure 2.

They	have	refused to do so
Behaver	Proc: Behavioural	
S	F	P
Topical Theme	Rheme	

While table 1 through a verbal process --/have been calling/ conveys the several calls made by the people of Benue state as instantiated by the temporal deixis or circumstantial adjunct ----/For several years /, table 2 through a behavioural process as well dispenses the action of an absolute refusal by the FG to the several calls made by the people of Benue state for several years. Conversely, we have the communicative functions of calling and refusal respectively. The pronoun /we/ as an unmarked topical theme represents the people of Benue state who have been making the calls for rescue from the speaker's viewpoint. The temporal deixis or circumstantial adjunct

---/*For several years* / in the first declarative mood structure functions as a marked topical theme that iteratively strengthens the speaker's position on the claim that the event must have occurred more than once. The deictic element '*they*' which also functions as a reference foregrounding the behavioural act of refusal in the mood structure // *they have refused to do so*// becomes a categorical factual statement that conveys the killing as an intentional act, sequel to the FG's outright repudiation to intervene in the state of affairs. The deictic linguistic elements create a connection between the discourse and the situation. They become significant linguistic alternatives within the declarative mood that help the speaker or governor to confidently paint a picture of the state of affairs as he sees it and equally make the portrayal hard to contest.

In text 2 below, one finds the same linguistic use of the deictic referrer or reference '*this*' for details in the first and third declarative mood structures.

2. This is not acceptable. Go to Guma, the same killings have taken place. Go to Gwer West, the same killings have taken place. This is not right. The federal government has refused to take proactive steps to arrest this ugly situation that we are witnessing here today.

The first '*this*' in-- // *This is not acceptable*//, from the viewpoint of the speaker carries a certain attitudinal meaning of a rejection of the whole situation as it cataphorically points at the disturbing and disheartening state of affairs that successively follow the clause, apparently signified by material process imperative mood structures--// *Go to Guma, the same killings have taken place*// and // *Go to Gwer West, the same killings have taken place*//. The verb '*go*' performs not just a deictic function that directs the audience's

attention away from the speaker to the location where the homicides are committed but as an evidential statement that also foregrounds new information evolving from the FG's continual refusal to stem the insecurity crisis in the state.

The subsequent demonstrative pronoun ‘ *this* ’ in the third declarative mood structure---//*This is not right*// also carries an emotional meaning that points to the FG’s behavioural impassiveness to insecurity matters as captured in the declarative structure-- //*The federal government has refused to take proactive steps to arrest this ugly situation that we are witnessing here today*//.

The factive present perfect verb --// *has refused*// presupposes the truthfulness of the information that follows it, that is, the to-infinitive. As a verbal group, it seems to establish an observable action of continual silence exhibited by the federal government. Consequently, the continual silence could be inferred as communicatively functioning in the discourse as a deliberate act. This premeditated act is further illustrated in text 3 below via linguistic choices or elements that intertwine in the discourse.

3. You will recall that I alerted the nation when Fulanis in fourteen countries met in Yola and declared that except we repeal the prohibition of the open grazing law; Benue will not no peace. And underground, I did say I was targeted for elimination.... It was only God that saved me. I did say they were going after my people, so the federal government should arrest the leadership of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore that hosted that meeting. Up till today, nothing has been done. This is very unfortunate. It means we don’t have a government in place at the federal level.

At the level of transitivity choices, the conception of the FG's intentional act of silence to arrest the insecurity situation in Benue state is shaped by a process of reporting where linguistic alternatives such as modality, 'naming' and reference intertwined in transitivity choices to enhance the meanings of the discourse. Transitivity in systemic functional linguistics looks at the way processes are derived via the predicate. Thus, from the context, the study attempts to convey how the speaker presents this claim via different processes

The first modal element '/will/' in the mental process intertwining in a verbal process --// *You will recall* [[that *I alerted the nation when Fulanis in fourteen countries met in Yola*]] //, is invested as an expression of politeness in transporting a past occurrence or phenomenon before the knowledge of the public. This phenomenon is further signified by labels or naming words such as '/Fulanis/', '/fourteen countries /', and '/Yola/', ' to enhance the scenario that disregards questionable assumptions on foreseeable harm to the people of Benue. This foreseeable harm is established in the discourse as a mental intention of a group to commit a crime against another. This mental intention is further marked by a verbal process that announces an intention as signalled in // [[*Fulanis in fourteen countries*]]] *declared that except we repeal the prohibition of the open grazing law; Benue will not no peace* //. At the level of transitivity, the intended crime of threat is understood as resolute because from the language pattern, it is governed by the aforethought malice. By implication, there is an existing odium between both parties.

The subsequent verbal process is structured to strengthen the report of this intention against the people of Benue---// *I did say they were going after my people* //. It is on this note that the governor solicits or requests the FG via the modal verb 'should' to arrest the group to stop an intention with an impending danger as captured in

the modal structure --//so the federal government *should* arrest the leadership of Miyetti Allah //. The entire declarative structure becomes communicatively significant here, as the grammatical process of labelling or naming

‘/ Miyetti Allah /’ does not only direct or colour readers' view of the group referred to as being behind the problem but establishes the speaker's position against the federal government's refusal to arrest the group. The clause // *Up till today nothing has been done*// is probably expended to establish the speaker's claim that the FG's act of silence on the killings is intentional. The linguistic structure conveys a contrary opinion; hence, it constructs in the mind of the audience a representation of a situation that is at odds with a presupposed reality.

The clausal structure-- // *It means we don't have a government in place at the federal level* // which sums up text 3, foregrounds the FG's refusal to assent to a call for the security of lives and properties. This means that the meaning or content of the text can be understood from a mental perspective because to the speaker, the principal responsibility of a government is the security of lives and property but the declarative clause showcases some level of culpability as far as national liability is concerned. From the language, the governor seems to see no reason why the FG should exclude itself from conduct capable of giving rise to insecurity by failing to take measures that are within its power to arrest the situation. From the language system used, one perceives how an ideology is created from such a remark, which tends to advocate for the devolution of power to states since it is apparent that the FG is incapable of handling issues of insecurity affecting the state. The discourse also implies that SFL is capable of unveiling ideological underpinnings. In text (4), we are accosted with a blunt assertion in this regard.

4. You sent these people away from their villages; they came here to take refuge and today, they are being killed in this camp.

In except 4, the orchestration of insecurity by the repressive world of the speech can be comprehended also via transitivity. The clauses describe the role of the participants in the state of affairs or actions expressed. There are three material process clauses in the discourse that are successively and semantically connected by pronouns to represent and emphasise the alleged intentional act that culminated into a typical experience of displacement and maltreatment. For instance, the effect of the act is signified in the first clause where the deictic pronoun --//‘you’// is expended to blame or allege an intention. The pronoun increases our impression of the agent or actor involved in the act spoken because it attributes an intention to the actor.

The predicate or verbal group represents the thing that is been done--// ...*sent these people away*... //. But in the third clause, there is a role shift. The pronoun ‘*they*’ is used in the passive sense to accentuate the effect of this intentional act on the people. With this, the pronoun /‘*they*’/ is assigned the position or role of ‘*Goal*’ while the role of the ‘*Actor*’ is elided in the structure as captured in table 3. This is one of the reasons why passive structures are referred to as a marker of objective and impersonal style (Yadugiri, 2011, P.412). The essence is to assign blame to the FG for inaction. To this end, lexical items such as /*sent*/, /*away*/ and /*are being killed*/ in the clauses are structured to construe an intentional act on the part of the actors; thus situating the audience within the governor’s position concerning the situation. The representation of the process is further enhanced by table 3 below indicating how a passive

structure is realized differently from an active structure in terms of its functional role.

Table 3

Clause 1 (active)		You	sent		these people away	from their villages
Clause 2 (active)		They	came			here to take refuge
		S	F		C	A
		Actor	Proc: Material		Goal	Circum
Clause 3 (passive)	Today	they	are	being killed		in this camp.
	A	S	F	P	C	A
	Circum.	Goal	Proc: Material			Circum.
	Topical theme marked	Topical theme unmarked	Rheme			

(ii) **Linguistic patterns that foreground prejudice/ ethnic bigotry**

5. I saw where some security men were arresting people who had cutlasses, who had swords because they are from Benue state. How about the Fulani men? You know where they are. Go and disarm them

Text 5 ranges from declarative to interrogative and imperative which conveys some level of repression foregrounded by ethnic prejudice. Here, hate, bigotry or prejudice against the Benue people is sharply registered in the language patterns. The first declarative alluded by a mental process--*/I saw.../* tends to project hate against the Benue people. The subordinate clause */because they are .../* amplifies this hate via an adjunct of reason that projects bias and intolerance. The interrogative, on one hand, is instantiated by the governor to front this ethnic bigotry ---*// How about the Fulani men? //*. To the governor, the Fulani man is known for these weapons for which the Benue man is being arrested; hence, they are tolerated; why not the Benue man? The second declarative and the imperative are instantiated to resist such hostility. To the governor, whatever is done to 'A' should be done to 'B' without disparity. It is this polarization that fronts the governor's stance against prejudice or ethnic bigotry in the context. In a sense, polarization can also be achieved not only by pronominal but NGPs that are ideologically motivated as implicitly captured ---*/Benue people vs Fulani men/*. In texts 6 and 7, the same tradition of prejudices is enacted.

6. I know the implication of telling people to go on self-help and I want to repeat my call that if you are unserious on this security matter; Mr President allow us to buy AK47s and face these people. Give us a license so that we too can face

them. You have armed your brothers and you have disarmed us.

In text 6, one conceives a kind of prejudice that is grounded by *ethnic preference* in the declarative and imperative mood structures. This phenomenon of disparity can be further enhanced from the point of transitivity where the state of mind of the speaker, on one hand, is propelled by mental verbs such as /know/ and /want/ respectively in //I know the implication of telling people...// and //I want to repeat my call that if you are unserious... // and material process verbs which request consent to propel actions in /allow/ and /give/ in //Mr President allow us to buy AK47s and face these people/ and //Give us a license so that we too can face them// and material process verbs that intensify this ethnic preference as instantiated by oppositional contrast in --// You have armed your brothers and you have disarmed us.//. With the oppositional contrast, the governor's idea of the whole situational reality is formulated.

This contrasting clause in a parallel pattern has a lot of implications. The contrast foregrounds discrimination that is levelled with threats. It directs one's attention to the unethical act against the Benue people. Also, the language system tends to convey how power and social domination by one group over the other are created in text. This social domination is conceived via the approval and disapproval of live ammunition. What one finds in the first and second material clauses is a kind of commitment by the governor against the continual state of insecurity bedevilling the state.

7. Mr President said the other day that security people *should* shoot anyone with AK47, and up till today, we have not heard where the security shot them. The Minister of Defence came and reversed what Mr President said....

Text 7 begins with a reported statement that is a verbal process to initiate prejudice. The modal verb ‘*should*’ tries to augment this prejudice in a sense since it expresses something that would have been normatively required. But to the amazement of the governor, the normative expectation is fouled with prejudice of predilection or preference. This prejudice is properly conveyed in the second and third clauses enhanced by mental and material processes respectively -----//*up till today, we have not heard where the security shot them/ and / The Minister of Defence came and reversed what Mr President said//*. The declarative mood--//*The Minister of Defence came and reversed what Mr President said//* is used to strengthen this predilection that tends to favour a harmful act committed by the referent (‘*anyone*’ or ‘*them*’) as less or worse. The representation of some of the processes is illustrated in table 4 to expand comprehension.

Table 4 Representation of Processes

Clause 1	<i>Up till today</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>have not heard</i>	<i>where the security shot them</i>
	A	S	F/P	C
		Senser	Proc: Mental	Phenomenon
Clause 2		<i>The Minister of Defence</i>	<i>came and reversed</i>	<i>what Mr President said</i>
		S	F	C
		Actor	Proc: Material	Goal

	Topical Theme unmarked	Topical Theme Marked	Rheme
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(iii) **Language patterns that Orchestrate resoluteness against out-group intimidation**

8. I am aware ... all over the country... this barbaric act is taken by the same Fulani and people are afraid to say it and they give the name bandits. They are not bandits. They are Fulani. These ones that came here. They were speaking that language insisting the state government proscribe or repeal the prohibition of open grazing. That *will* not happen. It is not my making. It is the people of Benue state that told me to do that one. I didn't sit on my own and take any law and so no one should try ... anything.

Four things interest one in text 8 via the choice of words. First, the factive verbs that follow one another as underlined tend to ground or authenticate the information as it borders around the situation.

- //I am aware...//--- a mental process that points and situates readers to that fact of the situation rather than speculation. It affirms the speaker's knowledge of the situation
- //This barbaric act is taken by the same Fulanis// ----a material process
- //People are afraid to say it// --- a mental process intertwined with a verbal process
- //They are not bandits // ; //They are Fulani// ---- relational process that is exemplified by negation--- not X but Y, making the information factual.

- //These ones that came here//-- a material process with a deictic reference, pointing to those involved in the guilty act.
- //They were speaking that language/--- verbal process --- used to authenticate or emphasise the aforementioned

The text is immersed with pronouns as deictic references to make the discourse cohere. Such cohesion enhances knowledge as they create a link between diverse parts of the discourse making the text flow from one fact to another. Second, the naming words or labels utilized by the governor point at the mastermind of the insecurity as captured in --/ *This barbaric act is taken by the same Fulani/, /They are not bandits/ and / *They are Fulani*/. The third is the use of the modal ‘will’ in //That **will** not happen// to show not just some level of certainty of refusal by the governor to non-adherence to repealing the open grazing law but commitment as part of an in-group that aligns with the people of Benue state and misalign with the opposition. With this, language becomes a symbol that influences thought, action and credibility. The fourth is the use of the cleft sentence or it-cleft documented as relational and material processes respectively captured in---//*It is not my making*// and //*It is the people of Benue state that told me to do that one*//.*

From the discourse, the ‘**it-cleft**’ seems to serve two essential functions (i) to indicate a contrastive focus and (ii) to portray rather new information. The contrast here is made explicit not implicit as in ---- // *It is not my making; it is the people of Benue state that told me to do that one*./. By logical notation, it implies --- not X but Y. The new information by the it-cleft clauses redirects one’s attention from a presumable assumption to a reality or fact concerning the enactment of the open grazing law. It shows that it was not a solitary

decision by the governor but rather by consensus as further grounded in --// *I didn't sit on my own and take any law...//*.

The 'it-cleft clauses' are used by the governor not only as declaration markers but as a shift to a new episode in the face and history of the Benue people. It has an in-group ideological undertone. With SFL, one perceives the distribution of language use orchestrated by the social transmission for change through the tenor of the discourse as it attempts to drive some level of power and solidarity. The submission here is that SFL cannot be void from ideological discourse because of its meta-functional approach to discourse that is context-dependent.

9. President Buhari must arise to his responsibility as Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces. If he does not do it, our people say that a goat doesn't bite but when you push it to the wall; it will bite.

The people's resoluteness against insecurity in the state is comprehended in text 9 via modality and the 'if' mood structures. The modal structure is signalled by the modal verb 'must' that deontically represents the governor's view on an obligation that has to be executed. The conditional mood structure further clarifies this resoluteness via a proverb that points to the people's will to retaliate if the needful is not done by the president---// *our people say that a goat doesn't bite but when you push it to the wall; it will bite//*.

(iii) **Linguistic patterns that call for actions against the state of insecurity**

10. President Buhari was elected by the people. He *must* arise and do something. No other person has the responsibility of

arming the security men and providing enough equipment ...
ensuring they eradicate this.

Text 10, through a material process that is phrased in the passive voice--// *President Buhari was elected by the people* //, instantiates a duty to rescue via a call fronted in the modal structure—
// He *must* arise and do something//. The modality is deployed by the governor to hypothesize or posit that a certain action is necessary to ensure the eradication of insecurity in the state. The anaphoric reference pronoun ‘*he*’ points back to the referent / Buhari / in the first mood structure proffering an insight into why the modal statement is made in the first instance. The argument by the passive structure --// *President Buhari was elected by the people* // is understandable since it reminds the president of the role of the people in the past towards the actualization of his presidential ambition. To this end, they must constitute a prime focus of his leadership. As indicated earlier in text 4, passive structures seem to be a significant linguistic choice by language users in driving the meaning of their communicative discourse. Here, the passive voice is used to actualise some level of fronting that tends to drive across the message of Governor Ortom to the President; reminding him of how he mounted the present position; a piece of essential information about President Buhari which is later supplied by the Rheme. While text 4 uses a passive structure that is agentless or void of an actor, text 10 enacts otherwise as tabulated below:

Table 5

Clause 1 (passive)	President Buhari	was	elected	by the people
	S	F	P	C
	Goal	Proc: Material		Actor
	Topical theme	Rheme		

While the modal structure in text 10 is devised as a continuant to compel certain obligations on the part of the president on security matters, the last mood structure that follows is used as a constructive reminder to the President to preside over his fundamental role in security matters. By implication, it is the responsibility of the President to make sure that doable legislation and policy on security are followed to the latter if Nigeria's security image must be redeemed. This despicable situation is not far from Onoja's (2019, p.6) submission that the absence of legislation and policy on security imperilled security in Nigeria.

11. Buhari cannot be playing on us around because these are Fulani men doing this same thing. As I said, they want to take over our land; if not what is the essence? You sent the people away from their farms and here they are in the IDP camp; you came to kill them. Buhari if you were the governor of Benue state, what do you want me to say? You must arise and do something to stop this.

Text 11 summarizes the entire content of the speech. The first modal structure attempts to convey the disingenuousness of the president as instantiated in // *Buhari cannot be playing on us around*// . The second part of the sentence further enunciates the situation using the subordinating conjunction */because/* to shed light on the reason for alleging. The aim of this could be to make the audience see that the entire situation confronting the Benue state is intentional. The intentionality is further amplified in subsequent clauses via a verbal process that is interrogatively dispensed--// *As I said, they want to take over our land, if not what is the essence?*//, and material

processes that do not only register the act as intentional but callous in-- // *You sent the people away from their farms//* and //*you came to kill them//*. The second interrogative clause with a vocative --- // *'Buhari, if you were the governor of Benue state, what do you what me to say?//* is rhetorically expended by the governor because of the conceived notion held. Also, it tends not to elicit an answer as it were, but expresses the attitude of the governor, implicitly justifying an action taken. The last modal structure tends to be forceful in this call for rescue because to the governor, the state of Benue is already faced with potential injury and death.

12. They are your kinsmen. **Call** them and **tell** them enough is enough./

13. You must stand and address these issues and declare an emergency on security. **Call** security submit. **Call** all of us together and let us agree and you **must** be sincere this time not just playing on us.

Imperatives call for actions, unlike interrogatives that call for information. While the imperatives in text 12 via a verbal process in --/**call** them and **tell** them enough is enough// attempt to exert some level of authority via warning, the imperatives in text 13 strictly evoke some level of power that tends to regulate behaviour that is perfidious or disingenuous ---// **Call** all of us together and let us agree and you **must** be sincere this time not just playing on us//. This regulation of behaviour is amplified by the modal structure --/**you must** be sincere this time...//. The modality seems to showcase an obligation towards sincerity. This infers that the President's behaviour at a point was characterized by insincerity towards the insecurity that affects the people of Benue state. While text 12 is tainted with some cynicism and divergence, text 13 is loaded with a

concept of convergence towards finding a lasting solution to the problem of insecurity.

4. Conclusion

All the dimensions discussed so far are attempts by the study to unveil how functional linguistics via the approach of SFL can contribute to the understanding of a discourse of this type. On the part of the audience, this kind of communicative speech tends to project the likelihood that the speaker will be perceived as credible. Hence, the audience tends to pay better attention to the message because of its candour on insecurity matters bedevilling the state. From the language of the speech, the informative level is comprehended via choices such as declarative mood and modality, transitivity, oppositional contrast, interrogatives and imperatives that signal diverse processes which determine what constitutes facts and truths and also regulate behaviour. The language use or grammatical patterns of the speech achieve the connecting functions between the speaker and the audience. The insecurity issues captured in the speech via the linguistic choices have helped front the severity of the problem as one that needs urgent redress. Thus there must be (i) policies to checkmate the activities of the herdsmen. (2) a call for a round table discussion or conference at the federal level where state governors are invited to proffer strategies that can be adopted to eradicate the insecurity problem with sincerity of purpose as captured in text 13---// **Call** all of us together and let us agree...//

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