An Appraisal Analysis of Verbal Hygiene in Bishop Oyedepo’s Crisis Motivated Sermon

IDOWU, Olubunmi. A (Prof), ALIU, Yetunde Olatokunbo, and IKUELOGBON Kehinde (PhD)

Department of Language and Literary Studies,
Babcock University,
Ilisan Remo, Ogun State
Phone Number: 07065879050
Email: yettycute24@yahoo.com

Abstract
This paper critically examines verbal hygiene in Bishop Oyedepo’s crisis-motivated church sermon. A descriptive design and an explanatory method was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of data and sample texts. 21 samples that contain the targeted linguistic items which are verbally unhygienic words and expressions were purposively selected for analysis. The sample texts were subjected to textual analysis. Analysis of the data was done within the framework of the Appraisal Theory. The Appraisal tools of Attitude resources (Affect, Judgement and Appreciation) were adopted for the textual analysis. From the findings, it was discovered that all the utterances used as data for the study reflected instances of negative affect, judgment and appreciation. The data revealed instances of controversial utterances, verbal attacks, utterances associated with physical assault and violence, bad premonitions, curses and unconfirmed reports. It was also discovered that the preacher exhibited emotions of anger and dissatisfaction in all the utterances analysed. The paper concluded that the crisis motivated sermon was characterized by unhygienic use of language and was influenced by the increasing cases of insecurity and terrorism that was rampant in Nigeria during that period. The paper recommended that proper enlightenment on the importance of verbal hygiene will contribute positively to the congregation, and the society through Christian sermons.

KEYWORDS: Verbal hygiene, Pentecostal Church, Sermons, Appraisal theory

Introduction
According to Idowu (2007), Christian sermons are preached for salvation and deliverance of worshippers from emotional, spiritual, social and political crisis. Also, through sermons, Christian believers are persuaded to lead the right path by revealing the basic truth. This is done through the dynamic use of language. Language according to Idowu, (2007) is a not just a means of communication but also an efficient facility of human behavior. Through language, sermons are delivered thereby sending an important message to the listeners who are the Christian believers. Ekeoha (2015), observed that the pragmatic study of Pentecostal Church Sermons, has generated interest among many linguists because of the way language is
creatively deployed for social, political, economic and spiritual impact. Sermons are richly situated in the context revealing the realities of the world we live. Language during sermon delivery can be used to address social, political, economic, emotional, and above all spiritual problems. Specifically, language may be used to pray, command, admonish, pass judgments, curse, assert, assault, insult, persuade and convince the congregation.

Apata (2016) observed an increase in Pentecostalism in different parts of the world especially Africa and specifically Nigeria in recent years. This is as a result of religious resurgence in Nigeria. Religious resurgence in both Christianity and Islam is a major determinant of peace in Nigeria. Language in Nigerian Pentecostal church sermons is used as instrument and weapon of spiritual warfare against insurgencies and religious motivated crisis in the country. Pentecostalism in Nigeria is now a means of reformation according to Anderson (2005). Through language socio-political issues are addressed. A typical example is the advocacy for the re-opening of churches and the rejection of the CAMA act by Bishop David Oyedepo in his sermons which was published by Punch newspaper on June 29th and August 17th, 2020.

Ekeoha (2015) identified one major feature of Nigerian Pentecostalism as “Crisis Spirituality”.

One major feature of Nigerian Pentecostalism is crisis spirituality. Crisis spirituality is the type that responds to situations, events and needs of Nigerians, as is evident in the sermons. Situations may include poverty, social frustration, witchcraft attacks, jinx, childlessness, etc. These situations, caused by economic crisis that was triggered by earlier political mess have impacted negatively on the Nigerian cultural, philosophical and spiritual mindset; as a result, the Nigerian Church is out to redress it. (Ekeoha 2015, p. 4).

Language is used as a non-physical weapon of spiritual warfare to ensure that abstract ideas are concretised hence, if the choice of words employed in crisis motivated sermons are not properly managed and checked, it could lead to a physical confrontation because language can evoke emotions, feelings, anger and hatred in the society. Verbal engagements during these sermons are combative and highly confrontational according to Ekeoha (2015) hence the need for the study of verbal hygiene. Idowu (2007) observed that there is a growing concern among critics on the nature of sermons heard in the Nigerian Pentecostal Churches and the media every day. This study is motivated by the need for peaceful coexistence in Nigeria, a country notable with ethnic, political and religious crisis. Also the recent advocacy against hate speeches in the country has motivated this study. Specifically, the study focus on the selected
sermon of Bishop David Oyedepo, a cleric and the presiding Bishop of the Living Faith Church, one of the most prominent Nigerian Pentecostal Churches. Several linguistic studies in sermonic discourse have been carried out from the grammatical, stylistic, semantic and pragmatic perspectives.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study adopts the Appraisal Theory of Linguistics as the framework for the study. The Appraisal theory is based on tenor in context situation and interpersonal meaning in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This theory is taken from M.A.K Halliday’s interpersonal meaning in language at the level of discourse semantics, (Martin & White, 2005). Appraisal as a theory used to describe and explain how the speaker/writer uses language to show their feeling, and their relationship to the listener/the reader. Three categories are classified in Appraisal Theory. They are Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation. Attitude is subdivided into: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Attitude mainly refers to the values by reference either to emotional responses or to culturally-determined evaluating value systems (Martin & White, 2005).

Attitude is conveyed by means of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Affect is a kind of emotional reflection or response based on behavior, text, and phenomenon. Affect can be expressed explicitly with positive or negative sense of emotion in words, such as love/hate, happy/sad, joy/despair, worried/confident, etc. It can also be expressed implicitly as an indirect sign of emotion. Judgment refers to attitudinal evaluation in which individual behavior is judged positively or negatively according to social norms and social constrains. Appreciation is an evaluation for the aesthetic characters on the text, process, or phenomenon, mainly for an inanimate object, rather than the behavior of people.

**Methodology**

A descriptive design and an explanatory mixed method was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of data and the sample texts. This is because only the texts that contain the targeted linguistic items which are verbally unhygienic words and expressions are selected. 21 Sample texts from the sermon titled “How to invoke vengeance” delivered by Bishop David Oyedepo, the Founder of the Living Faith Church,
International, in the month of November, 2014 were purposively selected as data for the study. The Secondary data that will be used for this study were sourced from https://youtu.be/q5urgzmYnEM. Although the data were retrieved in their audio forms, they were transcribed for the ease of analysis. The data are referred to as text in this study and they were subjected to textual analysis. Analysis of the data was done within the framework of Martin & White (2005), Appraisal Theory. The linguistic tools to be explored in this study are the appraisal resources of Attitude (affect, judgement and appreciation).

Data Analysis

Synopsis of the Sermon
The crisis motivated sermon delivered by Bishop David Oyedepo, the presiding Bishop of the Living Faith Church International, AKA Winners Chapel, in the month of November, 2014 titled “How to invoke Vengeance” was about the way Christian believers can do to invoke the vengeance of God in solving problems most especially, the ones affecting Christians in Nigeria. He emphasised the need for believers to be conscious of the recent happenings in the society and apply the teachings to these problems. He further showed his total dissatisfaction about the several killings by the Militant group popularly known as the Boko Haram. He emphasised the need to rise against injustice and killings of many Christians in the country. This he said should be done spiritually and physically. He charged the congregation not to give up but fight against the terrorist group as well as the agents in the government supporting the group. During the sermon, he engaged in prayers, speaking in tongues and made several prophetic declarations as weapons of spiritual warfare. He encouraged the congregation to use these weapons of spiritual warfare to fight the devil and his agents whom he referred to as the boko haram and their sponsors in the government. While preaching he specifically instructed members to kill anyone who attempts to attack Christians with the aim to kill. He cursed the group and prayed for their extinction. He concluded the sermon by explaining the different ways by which believers can invoke vengeance by praying expectantly, fasting and faith.

Appraisal analysis of Attitude resource and excerpts from the sermon
Excerpt 1
“…Lord if it is your will to break up Nigeria, break it now!”
From Excerpt 1, the preacher showed dissatisfaction concerning the state of affairs in Nigeria. This was revealed in his prayer of request for God to “break up” Nigeria. There was a judgement revealing God in positive capacity to break up Nigeria. It is obvious from the utterance that the preacher had a negative valuation for Nigeria, a nation characterized by several killings and bloodshed.

Excerpt 2

“…If Nigeria waits for the church to rise, there will be no more nation. What Nonsense… what demonic devils, what Islamic demons… If Nigeria waits for the church to rise, Nigeria will disappear as a nation…”

Excerpt 2, revealed that the preacher was dissatisfied and disinclined with the cohabitation of the Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This was as a result of insecurity experienced across the nation. The preacher had a negative tenacity towards the unity of a multi-religious nation. This resulted in his negative reaction and value of the nation. The negative reaction was exemplified by the expressions “Islamic demons” and “demonic devils”.

Excerpt 3

“…I was even told from report that they were targeting this church… even if I were asleep, if u see anybody here, kill him… kill him and spill his blood on the ground! I am saying that to you. What nonsense!”
In excerpt 3, the preacher expressed dissatisfaction towards the report he received that churches were targeted by the terrorist groups. This revealed the state of insecurity in the nation. The report triggered a negative reaction from the preacher who ordered the congregation to “kill” whoever attempts to terrorize the church. This act of ordering the congregation to kill indicated a negative propriety and Normality because it does not conform to the conventionally accepted behavior in the church of God.

**Excerpt 4**

“Even the president said they have infiltrated his government, to do what? Must the North continue to rule? What devils!”

**Excerpt 5**

“If you catch anyone that looks like them, kill him! There is no reporting him to anybody… kill him. I will spill his blood on the ground. What nonsense!”
In excerpt 5, the preacher expressed dissatisfaction towards the report he received revealing that churches were targeted by the terrorist groups. This report made the preacher to order members to kill whoever attempts to terrorize the church. The preacher’s act of ordering the congregation to kill is a negative reaction. It revealed that the preacher strongly rejected terrorism in Nigeria. Ordering the congregation to kill is a negative normality.

**Excerpt 6**

“...Walk in confidence, any devil that walks around you will be slain by fire…”

In excerpt 6, the preacher ascribed a negative valuation to the devil and he encouraged the congregation to “walk in confidence” meaning that they should not exercise any form of fear towards the devil as a result of the insecurity experienced across the nation. The preacher had a negative valuation of the devil because God has the positive capacity and power to protect Christian believers.

**Excerpt 7**

“...While we are claiming to curtail the Boko-Haram onslaught, we’re on the other hand “sponsoring” in quote, or “abetting” in quote, the Fulani herdsmen and their murderous act…”
Excerpt 7 revealed the preachers dissatisfaction and disinclination towards the government for the claiming to have curtailed the attacks. However, the reality and the state of insecurity suggested otherwise therefore, the preacher disagreed. His judgment revealed a negative veracity and capacity by the government because according to the preacher, the facts revealed otherwise. The preacher revealed that the government’s claim were false and he accused the government for “sponsoring” and “abetting” the “Fulani herdsmen”.

Excerpt 8

“…The soul of Nigeria is near the point of death.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>Negative Nomality</td>
<td>Negative Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Excerpt 8, a negative value was given to Nigeria. This indicates a negative normality as a result of insecurity. The preacher revealed his dissatisfaction and prophesied that “the soul of Nigeria is near the point of death”.

Excerpt 9

“…And when the citizens can no longer trust government for security, a state of anarchy is already in view. Insurrection might as well be on the way.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>Negative Tenacity</td>
<td>Negative reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Excerpt 9, Nigeria was given a negative tenacity because of the preacher’s dissatisfaction towards insecurity in Nigeria. This negative reaction made him to suggest that “insurrection might as well be the way”.

7
Excerpt 10

“This largely unchecked aggression of Fulani herdsmen, may eventually choke the soul of Nigeria to death. God forbid!”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>Negative Normality</td>
<td>Positive reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Excerpt 10, the preacher gave a premonition about Nigeria’s death, if the activities of the terrorist group was not checked. However, he rejected the premonition by saying “God Forbid”. The act of rejecting revealed a positive reaction.

Excerpt 11

“…Can you be stepping on my toes and said just lets have peace? I’ll say take your leg, and you say… you know something… let’s have peace… this Nigeria…let’s have peace. It is not peace we’ll have, its exchange of blows we’ll have. (Response “Yes”). Exchange! I will hit you “Bam!”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Negative propriety</td>
<td>Negative reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 11 revealed the preachers dissatisfaction towards a peaceful coexistence in Nigeria when insecurity imminent. His negative reaction was illustrated with the phrase “exchange of blows” and the onomatopoeic word “Bam!” which suggested physical violence. This revealed a negative propriety because the act of violence is totally unconventional and unacceptable in the church of God.

Excerpt 12

“No civilization, no opposition, under heaven can make the word of God of no effect. No Boko haram, not their sponsors, not this evil government, not this killer government can make the word of God of no effect…”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>Negative Normality, Capacity</td>
<td>Negative reaction, valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 12 revealed the preacher’s total dissatisfaction towards “civilization, Boko Haram, their sponsors and the government”. The reason for this was the inability of the government to curtail the evil act of killing Christians. The preacher was determined to destroy the evil perpetrators and this was illustrated through the negative valuation of the Nigeria government by referring to them as “killer government” and “evil government” for their inability to provide adequate security. This act of slandering is a negative normality.

**Excerpt 13**
“We are against Christianity!” They said it in their dirty language!”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Negative Tenacity</td>
<td>Negative reaction, valuation, propriety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 13 revealed the authors dissatisfaction against the statement “we are against Christianity”. He reacted negatively by giving a negative value to the implied Arabic language which was the language terrorists groups used to communicate. He referred to the Arabic language as a “dirty language”.

**Excerpt 14**
“...Every one of you will walk naked on the streets of Nigeria, because my God will make you mad.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Negative Normality</td>
<td>Negative reaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In excerpt 14, the preacher gave a negative judgment borne out of dissatisfaction on the insecurity in Nigeria. He cursed the terrorists saying that they “will walk naked on the streets of Nigeria”. He called upon God to make them mad. The speech act of cursing was a negative normality and propriety.

Excerpt 15

“...I told Nigeria, I said “watch”, you are voting a killer system into power. I said it with all my passion and I saw it!”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Negative Propriety, Tenacity</td>
<td>Negative reaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 15 revealed the preachers dissatisfaction towards Nigerians for voting the government at that time into power. This was revealed through the preacher’s negative reaction by referring to the government as “a killer system”.

Excerpt 16

“...I saw a blood thirsty army of men coming to cause massacre in the country. I saw it…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>Positive Capacity Tenacity</td>
<td>Negative Valuation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A negative valuation of the government was illustrated in excerpt 16. The preacher described the government as “blood thirsty army of men”. He directly accused the government of being responsible for the killings in the country. He presented the government in a positive capacity to kill and destroy.

Excerpt 17

“...Telling the blind the way to go is a problem.... There is a blind church full of blind leaders... with their eyes open, they went into the ditch…”
Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction) | Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety) | Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation) \\
--- | --- | --- \\
Insecurity | Negative Propriety | Negative reaction \\
Dissatisfaction |  |  \\
Unhappiness |  |  \\

In excerpt 17, the preacher reacted negatively to Christians who supported and voted the government into power. He described them as a “blind church full of blind leaders”. This is a negative judgment against the body of Christ.

**Excerpt 18**
“...Is there a government? No! Irresponsible, insensitive, callous, blood thirsty, destructive, retrogressive…”

Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction) | Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety) | Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation) \\
--- | --- | --- \\
Insecurity | Negative Normality, Propriety | Negative Valuation \\
Dissatisfaction |  |  \\
Unhappiness |  |  \\

In excerpt 18, the preacher asked a question “is there a government?” and he gave a negative response “no!” This revealed his unhappiness and dissatisfaction towards the government. He gave a negative valuation to the government by using the words “irresponsible, insensitive, callous, blood thirsty and destructive”. This act of calling names is against the ethics revealing a negative normality and propriety.

**Excerpt 19**
“...Robbers, rogues, fraudsters, fighting corruption with corruption! Foul!”

Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction) | Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety) | Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation) \\
--- | --- | --- \\
Dissatisfaction | Negative Propriety, Capacity | Negative Valuation and reaction \\
Unhappiness |  |  \\

The preacher engaged in the act of calling names in text 19. He referred to the government as “robbers, rogues and fraudsters. This is a negative valuation and negative judgment against the government whom he claimed were “fighting corruption with corruption”. The word “foul” suggested that the preacher was unhappy with the situation.

**Excerpt 20**
“…How can a corrupt mind fight corruption?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Negative Capacity</td>
<td>Negative reaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In excerpt 20, the preacher asked a rhetorical question “how can a corrupt mind fight corruption”. The preacher’s negative reaction suggested that the government was in a negative capacity to fight corruption.

**Excerpt 21**
“…There are people, if I see them in heaven, God know I will be angry! So they can’t be there! They go to hell by the fastest flights… fastest flights… the bible says you shall condemn. You condemn, I will confirm, but the church is saying God have mercy… on whom?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect (Disinclination, unhappiness, insecurity, dissatisfaction)</th>
<th>Judgement (Normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, propriety)</th>
<th>Appreciation (reaction, composition, valuation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Negative veracity, Propriety, Normality, Tenacity</td>
<td>Negative Composition, Reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Claiming that someone cannot make heaven in excerpt 21 is a negative judgment that revealed a negative veracity, propriety, normality and tenacity. The total condemnation by the preacher was against the conventionally accepted standard of behavior expected of a clergy. The bible suggests in Ezekiel 33:11 that “say unto then: “as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live”. Therefore, the preacher’s outburst was revealed in his utterances that were negatively composed. The preacher’s dissatisfaction about the state of insecurity across the nation produced a negative judgment through the preacher’s statement that “they will go to hell by the fastest flight”.
Figure 1 Summary of the Attitude resources of the data presented for Appraisal analysis

From the analysis presented in figure 1, it is evident that the attitude resources were adequately explored. Imports of Attitude are revealed in affect, judgment and appreciation. The affect resources identified from the text are dissatisfaction, unhappiness, insecurity and disinclination. The imports of Judgment are negative normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity and propriety while the imports of appreciation identified are negative reaction, composition and valuation.

Discussion of Findings

From the data presented, it was discovered that the excerpts analysed reflected negative affect, judgment and appreciation. Controversial utterances, verbal attacks, verbal abuse, utterances associated with physical assault, and violence, bad premonitions and curses characterized the sermon analysed. The emotions of the preacher was filled with anger and total dissatisfaction about the insecurity in the country. Excerpt 1, is a direct order in form of a wish for God to break up Nigeria. The phrasal verb “Break up” is a negative statement which may trigger disunity among the different religious and ethnic tribes in Nigeria. The preacher made the
suggestion because of the killings and suffering inflicted on Christians by the Fulani herdsmen and Boko haram in the north. This unhygienic statement may cause disunity and chaos across the nation. The church of God should not be the source of violence, hence such statements should be avoided.

There were verbal attacks and hate speeches in the excerpts. In excerpt 2, the preacher referred to Muslims as “Islamic demons” and demonic devils”. In excerpt 18 and 19, the government were called “robbers, rogues, fraudsters, insensitive, callous, irresponsible, blood thirsty” and so on. These negative words used to describe the government could damage the political image of the Nigerian government. Accusing Muslims to be terrorists and ascribing negative qualities to the government could trigger violence and conflict in the country. In excerpt 20, the rhetorical question “how can a corrupt mind fight corruption” was asked by the preacher. This is a direct accusation which suggested that the government of Nigeria is corrupt. However true or false the statement may be, it could trigger political violence which may hamper the peace and stability of the nation. Preachers should find a more appropriate way of presenting such controversial issues.

Utterances associated with physical assault and violence used by the preacher in excerpts 3, 5, and 11 such as “kill him”, “kill him and spill his blood on the ground”, “I will hit you, Bam!”, “exchange of blows” are verbally unhygienic. These expression may cause physical violence. There were several unconfirmed judgments and accusations brought up by the preacher in the sermon. In excerpt 3, the preacher claimed that the terrorists groups were targeting the churches. On the 28th of November, 2014, the BBC news reported that dozens of people have been killed in a gun and bomb attack during prayers at one of the biggest mosques in the northern Nigerian city of Kano. It was reported that more than 100 people dies in the attack. These unconfirmed accusations by the preacher and the act of ordering the congregation to kill was overrated. Killings and violence of any kind should not be totally discouraged in sermonic discourse because they indicate physical violence hence, unhygienic. Also in text 7, the government was accused of “sponsoring” and “abating” the Fulani herdsmen and their murderous act. These unconfirmed reports may cause political and ethnic disagreements.
The preacher had a premonition which he stated in the sermon that “the soul of Nigeria is near the point of death”. This is totally unexpected because the bible confirms in proverbs 18:21 that “death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof”. The premonition that Nigeria is near the point of death is unhygienic and such expressions should be avoided in sermonic discourse. Preachers should ensure they confess the positive at all times for the good of mankind. It was also notable that the preacher placed a direct curse on the terrorists saying “every one of you will walk naked on the streets of Nigeria”. This expression is totally unhealthy because a country filled with mad people is inhabitable. In excerpt 21, the preacher gave a negative judgment by condemning the terrorists to hell. The bible suggests otherwise in Ezekiel 18:23, “have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways and live?” As suggested from the bible, God loves sinners and wishes for them to repent. Therefore, the total condemnation of these evil perpetrators should be avoided rather preachers should always pray for the repentance of sinners.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was also discovered that crisis motivated sermons are influenced by crisis situations. The sermon analysed was influenced by the increasing cases of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria. The preacher used the sermon as a spiritual awakening for all Christians on these happenings and how to overcome them. Preaching according to Obuasi (2004) was described as a way of urging people to accept certain ideas for the transformation of the society. This was exemplified by most of the utterances analysed in the data presented. According to Idowu (2007) Christian sermons contribute immensely to the physical, spiritual, social and emotional wellbeing of people in the society. She also emphasised that Christian sermons are preached for the salvation of the worshippers and to deliver them from emotional, spiritual, social, economic and political problems. This study also confirms these assertions by the scholars. Achoeah, (2013), who revealed some new practices in Nigerian churches. These new practices are mostly reflected through unhygienic utterances which may cause violence. This study also agrees with (Coker & Narty 2012, p. 554) that preachers in the Nigerian Pentecostal churches have failed to persuade the audience to good faith but they rather encourage foul language which should be avoided in sermonic discourse. Nnuta & Ezeifeka (2017) were able to prove that verbal hygiene is an important decisive factor and the instrument of achieving
unity, peace and conflict resolution since political, religious and ethnic crises in Nigeria were often triggered by unguarded utterances. Therefore, Nigerian Pentecostal church preachers should be conscious of verbal hygiene and avoid all forms of controversial utterances that can cause conflict in the society.

References


