Name Calling as a Strategic Communicative Tool: An Analytic Study of Jacques Pauw's Text "The President's Keepers"

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Names are vital in social construction since the process of naming is a linguistic act which is linked with anticipations, values, qualms and events in people's lives (De Klerk, 1996:18). Apart from proper name acquired from birth, humans are at times bestowed with names based on their appearance, background or deeds and this is termed name-calling. Politicians often resort to name calling to gain advantage over their oppositions (Ebeogu, 1993:133 cited in Kofi 2006:19). The purpose of this study was to explore how name-calling serve as a communicative tool in textual discourse with a distinct focus on Jacques Paw's text entitled "The president's keepers". The objectives of the study were to flag out discourse segments exhibiting name-calling in the text and to highlight the socio-cultural interpretation derived from the bestowed names of the name-bearer. The study applied qualitative approach and discourse-textual analysis as the research methodology. "The president's keeper's text served as a secondary instrument of data collection". Discourse segments from the text displaying name-calling served as the population of the study, whereas purposive sampling was used to reduce the population into workable number of names. Critical Discourse Analysis was used to analyse the purposively selected names. Coding was then employed to arrange data for analysis and interpretation. The findings of the study reveal that name-calling is mostly used as verbal abuse that connotes negativity demonstrated by the source towards the target; subsequently socio-cultural clues give rise to name-calling and people are bestowed with names based on their general deeds.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background to the problem of the study

The study seeks to explore name-calling as a strategic communicative tool in political discourse with a precis focus on Jacques Pauw's text entitled "The president's keeper". Communication and language are indispensable because as communication transpires, certain language features are prevalent in communicators' messages and such features amongst others to be precise are rooted within onomastics, which is at the temperament of this study. Koopman (2002:8) states that the term 'onomastics' is derived from the Greek word 'onoma' meaning 'name'. Burchfield (1981:72) cited in Chauke (1992:8) defines onomastics as "the scientific study of names as names", this is a commentary on the human tradition of naming entities. Naming is not a haphazard exercise but is a socially conditioned linguistic behaviour (Mamvura, 2014:2). It is therefore, essential through language to understand names and their communicative functions.

People are often bestowed with negative names at certain stages in their lives when they assume positions, behave in a certain way and are involved in questionable activities and this is termed name-calling. Tsai (2006:14) explicates name-calling as the labelling of others with derogative or negative terms; it connects a person to a negative symbol or image. Name-calling practices are prevalent in a variety of cultures and groups and they serve a wide range of social and semantic functions (Kennedy & Zamuner, 2006:387). This is vital in this study since it consider names as

communicative tool used to achieve specific goals. Name-calling is pervasive in almost every sphere of life because it ranges from families, schools, work and other social spaces.

Name-calling is a dominant factor in politics, hence, the current researchers delimited this study to Jacques Pauw's' text which is a political tapestry. This is affirmed by Miller (1987:16) cited in Tsai (2011:14) who attests that politicians who want to discredit their oppositions often use name-calling in politics by calling each other names such as fascist, coward, racist and terrorist. Helen Zille as a politician was once named a racist, Jacob Zuma was once named a thief after he had utilized public funds to construct Nkandla and owing to Marikana saga, Cyril Ramaphosa was named a killer, this are some of common name-calling associations pertaining to politics. Calling the police force "pigs" in media, for instance, is not just derogative, but it borders the entire configuration of government power as filthy and immoral and this result is police force being considered as worthless and it legitimize assaults on them.

In this study, name-calling is taken to be a communicative tool. The current researcher strongly believe in the assertion that name-givers strategically devise names for the addressees, meaning that some names are used as strategic tools to hurt, humiliate, antagonize or dominate. As affirmed by Sengani (2008:19), names carry a message from the name-giver to the addressee. This reveal that there is a certain discourse behind a specific name which pertains to the content and context of such name. Nonetheless, research evidence proves that scholars (onomasticians or onomastologists) more especially in Africa have turned a blind eye when it comes to name-calling as an aspect of onomastics. Hence, the pertinent of this study which seeks to explore name-calling in political discourse with a precise on Jacques Pauw's "The president's keeper". This study seeks to contribute immensely into the scholarship of political linguistics as an emerging field by amalgamating the field of onomastics, communications and politics.

1.2. Problem Statement and Focus

Name-calling is often used amongst politicians to disrepute an individual, for instance, calling a fellow politician 'corrupt' (Miller, 1987:16 cited in Tsai, 2006:14). Name-calling constructs are manipulated by the society in terms of reference, conveying information, describing and re-defining individuals by tarnishing their identity. These attributes created affects the social lives of the name-bearers by attracting long term negative descriptions and properties in reference to the name-bearer. This pertains to Bertrand Russel (1952) descriptive theory which positions names in terms of their descriptors. This reveals that name-calling pose psychological consequences that affect the name-bearers in a way that tarnishes their identities in a long-run as evident in the Jacques Pauw's text "The president keeper's" which caused political divergence and impacted hugely on the lives of several politicians. It is therefore, important to capture and analyse linguistic significations of bestowed names. However, the meaning of these derogatory names bestowed to name-bearer during name-calling remains unexplained and indefinite. Hence, the need to uncover the deeper meanings, this is critical since human cultural tenets and knowledge are embedded in some of these derogatory names which are socially constructed within the society. According to Kennedy and Zamuner (2006:387), there is a limited existing body of knowledge on the aspects of name-calling as a sub-field of onomastics in linguistics.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

With a distinct focus on Jacques Pauw's text entitled "The president's keeper", the goal of this study was to analytically explore name calling as a strategic communication tool in textual discourses.

The researchers intended to achieve the purpose of the study by exploring the following interrelated specific objectives:

- ❖ To identify discourse segments exhibiting name-calling elements that are prevalent in the text "The president's keepers".

- ❖ To establish meaning out of name-calling exhibited in the text

- ❖ To highlight the socio-cultural interpretation derived from the bestowed names.

1.4. Theoretical Points of Departure

According to Creswell (2009:33), a theory is a set of "interrelated constructs or concepts, definitions, and plans that present an orderly interpretation of a phenomenon. The study adopt a triangulation theoretical framework due to its espousal of more than one theory. According to Angen (2000:66) triangulation theoretical framework involves using multiple theoretical perspectives to examine and interpret data. The study was grounded on multiple 'theories of naming' on the basis that the meaning of a name remains a contested subject in the philosophy of language as affirmed by Jamil (2010:50). This study makes use of semiotic and social constructivism theories of communication as naming theoretical framework.

Semiotics is the study of signs and sign-systems. This includes the investigations of apprehension, prediction and meanings; how is it that we "develop meaning, make predictions, and apprehend the world" (James, 2011:211). General semiotics is the theory of the production and interpretation of meaning. In his studies, Pierce calls semiotics a theory of "signs" or "signification". This developed into analysis of signalling systems (James, 2011:212). Taking into consideration characteristics of a sign in line with the social constructivism theory, this study details the representative and interpretative meaning behind a specific bestowed name. For example, the name "Zupta" has its own meaning within the society. The social constructivism theory on the other hand, proposes that meanings are created by the society through language usage to connote the happenings, this means that the society construct names and attach meanings to them. The words and phrases of a language, for example, have meanings within the language; and have meaning only because of their place in a specific languages structure.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Concept of a Name

Fowler (1990:787) states that the word 'name' generally means the "word by which a person, animal, place, or thing is known or spoken of". A name uniquely identifies a person, or a specific object as a linguist expression (Harvalik, 2007:9). Furthermore, Ngubane (2000:20) states that a name is not the same thing as a word because words designate classes whereas, names entitle persons or things. In concurrence, Machaba (2004:38) says that the distinction between words and names lies between meaning and function, in the sense that words mean and names function.

2.2. Names as Meaningful Communicative Tools

Currently, there is a debate transpiring with regards to meaning and function of names and scholars are projecting various antagonistic views. Since this study has the potential to contribute immensely in the ongoing debate, the current researchers present an overview of the main concepts. The query of whether names have meaning or not began among theorists eighteen hundred years ago (Aleksiejuk, 2015:25). It is vital to note that not all theoretical statements on the meaning of names are exclusively rigorous. Strawson (1950:338–341) cited in Aleksiejuk (2015:28), for instance, states that names have no descriptive meaning which brings in the concept of connotation which implies that the meaning lies deep within. According to Peirce cited in Pietarinen (2010:342) names might at times be considered as an informative tool upon first encounter. Names often carry readily accessible information about their bearers. For instance, nicknaming and name-calling is often descriptive and provide retrievable information about the bearer (Aleksiejuk, 2015:33). According to Nicolaisen (ibid), there are three levels of meaning found in each name. These levels are lexical, referential and pragmatics/associative as detailed below:

Lexical meaning is the basic meaning of the speech parts that constitute the name; it is sometimes also called 'literal meaning' (Louwrens, 1993:16). Reference involves the relationship that exist between linguistic elements, words, sentences and the non-linguistic world of experience (Palmer, 1981:29). According to Raper (1981:68) For instance the name 'Zupta', it projects various meaning that can only be determine if one comprehend the intention of the speaker. Finally, pragmatic or associative meaning consists of four different types of meaning, namely, connotative, effective or emotive, social or stylistic and phonic associative (Raper, 1987:81 in Ngidi, 2012:84). Hence, particular lexical items are used in the naming process.

2.3 The Socio-Cultural Significance of Names

Various onomasticians have provided commentary on the socio-cultural significance of names. Yanga (1978:19) in his article entitled "Language planning and onomastics in Zaire" states that names play an indexical role, reflecting the socio-cultural changes or events in the community. He reports that the African onomastic system reflects history, culture and socio-political events that have marked the national scene. In agreement, Bonvillain (1997:27) adds that "words have referential senses, labelling persons, objects, events in the world in thought and imagination. Words also have cultural meaning, reflecting attitudes, values or shared symbols". Words and sentence constructions can

have situational relevance, with some being used in formal contexts and others being used in informal situations. However, the usage of certain expressions has situational relevance that may not be apparent from the literal meaning of those words.

2.4 Conceptualization of Name-Calling in Communication

Name-calling is the labelling of others with derogative or negative words; it connects a person to a negative symbol or image (Steiner, 2011:14). It is often used in politics by politicians who want to discredit their oppositions (Miller, 1937:16 cited in Tsai, 2006:14). As pointed out in the background of this study, name-calling is not nick-naming however, both are sign serving as a referential point. Although this study is focused on political discourse, previous studies has shown that homophobic name-calling is one of the most common forms of victimization present in schools. Studies have shown that students report hearing words like "faggort", "dyke" or "queer". Name-calling may be linked to status and power because those in authority can easily impose names on the powerless (Moyo, 2002 cited in Kennedy & Zamuner, 2006:391). It is also linked to social groups for example, calling foreigners "kwerekwere" (De Klerk, 2002) and to gender (Wierzbicka, 1999 cited in Kennedy & Zamuner, 2006: 391).

Name calling involves the use of labels to project an idea in a favourable or unfavourable light. Its purpose is to discourage individuals from examining substantive evidence on an issue. It also employs emotional reactions and encourages the public to draw hasty conclusions with only a cursory examination of issues (Steiner 2011:14). One frequent use of name calling comes when stereotyping is employed to paint a negative image of the opposition or enemy. The intent may be to suggest major political or ideological differences, real or imagined. Individuals, ethnicities, and national groups have often been disparagingly labelled. In modern society, many examples abound. During the Cold War, Ronald Reagan called the Soviet Union an "Evil Empire" while, in the course of recent Gulf Wars, President Bush labelled Saddam Hussein another Hitler, whereas, Hussein painted the United States as the ''Great Satan'' (Sardar & Davies, 2002:147). The labelling of others as 'terrorists' is a form of name-calling. These scholars further indicate that Muslims have always been named as the ''despised" and ''accursed race", ''unclean nations", and "demons worshipers".

2.5. An overview of the text "The president's keeper"
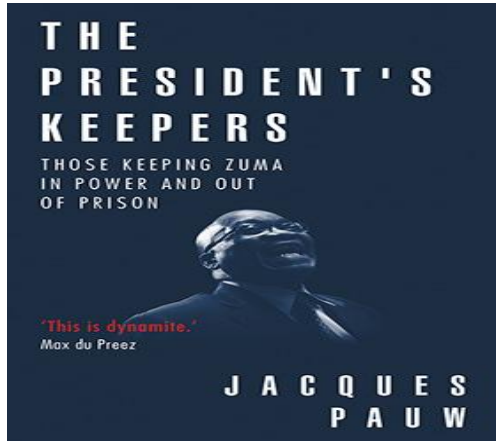
The president's keeper is a journalistic piece detailing the dark secrets of the corrupted government of Jacob Zuma the former president of South Africa. 'An amazing piece of work, stuffed with anecdote and evidence. Investigative journalist Jacques Pauw exposes the darkest secret at the heart of Jacob Zuma's compromised government: a cancerous cabal that eliminates the president's enemies and purges the law-enforcement agencies of good men and women. It is a journey with Pauw as he explores the shadow mafia state from KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape to the corridors of power in Pretoria and Johannesburg and even to clandestine meetings in Russia. It's a trail of lies and spies, cronies, cash and kingmakers as Pauw rises open the web of deceit that surrounds the fourth president of the democratic era (http://www.nb.co.za/Books/20140).\. "This is a dynamite that will shake the foundations of the halls of power", Max du Preez. ", one of the consequential books on South Africa since the end of white rule …", Financial Times.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study constituted a qualitative research design because the data are linguistic forms, constituting words, phrases or sentences rather than numbers. These forms of the data certainly represent one of the characteristics of the qualitative research design described by Bogdan and Biklen (1992:111). The methodology adopted for the study was discourse-textual analysis, wherein emphasis was placed on the book "The president's keepers" as the source of data. Fifteen (15) discourse segments from the text displaying name calling served as the population of the study, and purposive sampling was used to reduce the population into workable number of names. Seven (7) discourse segments (DS) were purposively selected and analysed to devise meanings. Data analysis and interpretation involved identification of discourse segments exhibiting name calling and arranging them for analysis through the use of coding. Critical Discourse Analysis was then used to analyse the randomly selected names. Critical Discourse Analysis was chosen as a method of data analysis because it does not limit its analysis to specific structures of text or talk, but systematically relates these to structures of the socio-political context. Critical Discourse Analysis was used to flag out and examine the names bestowed to politicians and the value attached to those names by the society.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study exhibit a prevalence amount of name-calling elements in the text "The president's keeper". The findings of the study reveal that name calling is mostly used as verbal abuse that connotes negativity demonstrated by the source towards the target. Subsequently socio-cultural clues give rise to name-calling and people are bestowed with names based on their general deeds. For instance, Jacob Zuma is called Zupta because of his associations with the Guptas. The following discourse segments were captured and analyzed in the text:

DS 1 - "These are Jacob Zuma's keepers – Richard Mdluli, Nomgcobo Jiba, Lawrence Mrwebi, Berning Ntlemeza, Arthur Fraser, Prince Mokotedi and Tom Moyane". (p.9)

Interpretation: A keeper is someone who looks after someone or thing, Mdluli is taken to be a lever or wedge to get Zuma into power. This also signifies the synergy between Jiba and Mduli whose case was dropped by the latter. The intention of name calling in this instance is to draw or divert public attention into the aforementioned names (politicians).

DS 2 -A columnist for a Sunday newspaper once wrote that journalist were "nagkardrywers" (sewage car drivers) of society". (p15)

Interpretation: A sewage driver is not uplifted within the society, this is an allusion that journalist delivers sewage or "nonsense" and this discredit the credibility in their writings. The columnist is attracting negative attention towards the work of journalists.

DS 3 - Hunter Thompson once said "Journalism is a "cheap catch-all for fuck-offs and misfits- a false door way to the backside of life". (p.15)

Interpretation: A fuckoff- is a time waster while a misfit – someone who just cannot fit in, this is to consider journalists as time wasters. The intention of this name-calling is to instigate reaction.

DS 4 - "President Jacob Zuma fired his minister and replaced him with ANC backbencher Des van Rooyen" (p.16)

Interpretation: This is a concealment, the speaker wants the audience to know that Van Rooyen is a backbencher (a member of the parliament who does not hold an office in the government.

DS 5 – "Zuma's clown Hlaudi Motsoeneng" (p.19)

Interpretation: A clown is used to entertain people, this draws public's attention into believing that Motsoeneng is to a certain extent stupid judging from his decision-making. This portrays Hlaudi as a foolish man who cannot justify his decisions.

DS 6 – "The faceless, nameless bunch" (p.23)

Interpretation: This is to project Zuma's associates with conspiracy and criminal activities hence the speaker does not want to name them. The mere fact of not naming them positions them in an unfavorable position.

DS 7 – "JZ's pole" (p.107)

Interpretation: This is an acronym associated with Jacob Zuma those who are within his pole are his keepers. Those who protect Zuma and who hide his mischaveneous ways are considered s his pole.

5. CONCLUSION

The study revealed the Presidents' keepers as a journalistic art exhibiting enormous prevalence of name-calling. Name-calling within the text is revealed directly and indirectly. Names performs informativity function, for instance when we point to individuals, we connect to the individual by "information previously possessed by them". For example, calling Hlaudi Motsoeneng 'Zuma's clown', reveal information about the association of these two. In South Africa name-calling is accompanied by stereotypes e.g. calling foreigners "Kwerekwere" and it tarnishes one's credibility. Name calling was used for various reasons such as concealment, instigating reaction, gaining compliance etc. Other name-calling association captured in the text includes: *Zuma's creatures, Presidential cronies, monkeys, zupta, ill-qualified gupta family*. Building from the findings of this study it is important for other researcher to further explore the aspect of name-calling.

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