



## A discursive analysis of the 2016 election campaign discourse in Zambia

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### Abstract

This study explores the political discourse of the presidential elections in Zambia with a view to establishing the discursive strategies of this discourse. This analysis is done by examining the discourse of one of the presidential candidates during the campaigns running to August 11, 2016 elections. The study is informed by the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) theoretical framework. The main research objective that the study addresses relates to how discursive practices are achieved in political discourse by employing certain rhetorical devices and how they are exploited by politicians to achieve their intentions and ambitions.

The data for the study were obtained from a number of political rallies by one of the leading political candidate conducted across the country, Mr Hakainde Hichilema. The political candidate was purposefully selected and the speeches were randomly selected. The data gathered were analysed using the analytical tools of Systemic Functional Grammar. The data analysis revealed that the candidate under study employed discourse strategies such as allusion, propagandistic language, and provocative language among others. The study concluded that while the discourse continues to be an effective platform for political struggles and power play, it also highlights the cultural, linguistic, and social factors which has a bearing on the language use of political actors in Zambia.

**Keywords:** discursive, election, othering, polarisation, political rhetoric, rhetorical devices, systemic functional grammar

### 1. Introduction

The study examines the discursive practice approach to language-in-interaction, elucidating the consequences of grounding language use in view of social realities as discursively constructed. It also scrutinises meanings as negotiated through interaction, of the context-bound nature of discourse in political campaigns of the presidential candidate under investigation. Young (2009) explains discursive practice as a theory of the linguistic and socio-cultural characteristics of recurring episodes of face-to-face interaction; episodes that have social and cultural significance to a community of speakers.

Since 1991 when multi-party politics were introduced in Zambia, a number of political parties have been competing for political power. In Zambia, general elections are held every five years. Prior to elections different political parties engage in serious political campaigns employing language characterised by a variety of rhetorical strategies as politicians solicit for votes. What matters in order to be understood during these campaigns, is not what politicians say, but rather how they present what they say.

During the run up to the August 11, 2016 elections, there were nine presidential candidates who were vying for presidency. However, the study focuses on the main opposition candidate - Hakainde Hichilema for the United Party for National Development (UPND), by critically analysing the discursive practices he employed in their campaigns. This investigation is with a view to establishing the persuasive strategies engaged by this presidential candidate in an effort to woo support of the electorate.

### 2. The Problem

Political campaigns are associated with certain rhetorical strategies that carry with them particular images that are

invoked by the politicians' diction during campaigns. However, there has not been any known exhaustive and representative study on the Zambian political campaign discourse, particularly with a focus on the naturally occurring verbal discourse in political rhetoric. Therefore, the rhetorical devices employed by politicians to achieve persuasion in political discourse in Zambia are not known. It is against this background that the study investigated discursive practices employed in the discourse of the presidential campaigns in order to evoke unconscious images and emotions in the audience with a view to achieving persuasion.

### 3. Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the rhetorical function of discursive practices in the political discourse of the political candidate under examination. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

- i) Analyse the discursive strategies used in the political campaign discourse of the political candidate under examination.
- ii) Examine the discursive function of rhetorical devices in the political campaign discourse of the political candidate under examination.
- iii) Establish the discursive significance of rhetorical devices in the political campaign discourse of the political candidate under examination.

### Research Questions

- i) What discursive strategies did the political candidate under investigation employ in his campaign discourse?
- ii) What is the discursive function of the rhetoric devices employed in the political campaign discourse of the political candidate under investigation?

- iii) What is the discursive significance of rhetorical devices used in the political campaign discourse of the political candidate under examination?

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

In order to adequately analyse the discourse of the presidential candidate under study, the study made use of the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) analytical framework as its guide. SFG is a functionally based theory, which examines the function that language has evolved to serve in society (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004)<sup>[7]</sup>.

SFG framework is a form of grammatical description originated by Michael Halliday. Kondowe (2014) avows that SFG is called systemic since it is established that individuals have alternative options available for them to yield linguistic utterances and texts. The system is what incorporates the notion of choice in language through grammar which is the system network. The grammar bids language users a variety of options and choices. The theory is called functional because of the variety of purposes language is used for (Halliday, 1994). The function of language is to make meaning, and these meanings are manipulated by the social and cultural context in which they are exchanged, and that the course of action of using language is semiotic: a process of making meanings by choice.

SFG put forward by Halliday (Halliday 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004)<sup>[7]</sup>, gives an enormous consideration on how the speakers create utterances and texts to carry out their intended meanings.

This view involves the analysis of real language events to understand purposes language serves in a variety of contexts, and to understand the way language itself functions. Systemic Functional Linguists, then, study how meanings are made in different contexts.

The SFG framework was used to analyse the campaign speeches of one of the leading candidates by identifying the discursive practices he exploited and bringing out the rhetorical functions of the discursive practices the candidate employed. Rhetorical devices are aspects of SFG.

#### 5. Literature Review

Studies on political discourse include the use of euphemisms and metaphors in political campaigns (Mihás, 2005)<sup>[13]</sup>, the syntactic and semantic properties of “Yes we can” (Bista, 2009)<sup>[3]</sup>, the use of hedging in political discourse (Fraser, 2010) and the semantic implication of modal auxiliary verbs in political manifestos as well as ideology and power relation in the pronoun (Nartey & Yankson, 2014)<sup>[14]</sup>. Macclay (2017) reveals the ways in which reality is constructed through representations of social actors; while Korhonen (2017)<sup>[11]</sup> performed an analysis of how language is used to advance political goals. Ademilokun (2015)<sup>[11]</sup> reveals that while discourse continues to be an effective platform for political struggles and power play, it also highlights the cultural, linguistic, and social factors which had a bearing on the language use of political actors in South Western Nigeria. This was in a study on the discursive strategies in selected political rally campaigns of 2011 elections in South Western Nigeria. The results of the study revealed that the participants employed discourse strategies in their campaigns. The present study is related to Ademilokun’s in that it examined rhetorical strategies in campaign discourse. However, the point of

departure is that the present study focuses on how rhetorical devices were employed in campaign discourse to achieve persuasion.

With regards to polarisation, Wirth-Koliba (2016) demonstrates that the ‘us’ and ‘them’ relationship is constantly present in politics, therefore different means of constructing such relations are needed. The present study identified instances of *us / them* expressions of positive in-group representations and negative out-group representations respectively in the discourse of the two candidates and analysed how they were used as rhetorical devices.

In a rhetorical study in Zimbabwe, Kangira (2005)<sup>[9]</sup> conducted a study on the rhetoric of the 2002 presidential election campaign. The study focused on the analyses of the rhetoric employed by the two major contestants in the 2002 presidential elections – the one who was holding office at the time, president Robert Gabriel Mugabe, candidate of Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the opposition candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Kangira demonstrates that Tsvangirai’s rhetoric which called for change was more persuasive to the electorate than Mugabe’s. The present study, like Kangira’s, performs a rhetorical analysis of the a presidential candidate in the 2016 elections with a view to establishing rhetorical persuasion.

Michira (2014)<sup>[12]</sup> applied descriptive methods of CDA to critically analyse the rhetorical devices and strategies in the presidential campaign discourse of April 4, 2013 elections in Kenya. He analysed the literary devices and strategies that were used by the main contenders for the presidency - Uhuru Kenyatta of the Jubilee Coalition (JC) and Raila Odinga of the Coalition Reform and Democracy (CORD). Michira demonstrates that language is a formidable tool that politicians employ to communicate policies and ideological positions as well as to create certain insights in order to influence and manipulate the votes with a view to gaining an advantage over their opponents. Like Michira’s, the present study endeavoured to investigate and establish the rhetorical strategies of the presidential campaign discourse in Zambia leading to the August 11, 2016 elections.

Furthermore, Ekharefo and Akoseogasimhe (2015)<sup>[4]</sup> demonstrate how political adverts can be employed by creatively constructing verbal and visual strategies to project political aspirants for acceptance by the Nigerian electorates. They did so in a study in which they performed a textual analysis of some political campaign advertisements for the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria with a view to unearthing the development issues raised, religious and personal attacks inherent in the published advertisements. The advertisements generally focused on the two leading parties in the country (People’s Democratic Party and All Progressives Congress). The data obtained were analysed using the Textual analysis research design.

In another study in America, Kazemiam and Hashemi (2014)<sup>[10]</sup> analysed Barack Obama’s 2012<sup>[10]</sup> Speeches in the light of Halliday’s Ideational Grammatical Metaphor, Rhetoric and Critical Discourse Analysis. Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis frameworks based on a Hallidayan perspective were used to depict the orator’s deft and clever use of these strategies in the speeches which are bound up with his overall political purposes. The results indicate that rhetorical devices investigated in the study are used as persuasiveness properties to improve the

effectiveness, clarity, and beauty of the speeches.

In a study on the use of language and political rhetoric, Rozina and Karapetjana (2009) <sup>[15]</sup> submitted that the linguistic manipulation can be considered as an influential instrument of political rhetoric. The study was devoted to exploring allusion, metonymy and metaphor - the linguistic devices used in rhetoric. However, the study took a narrow focus of linguistic manipulation which is just a part of political rhetoric and therefore the justification of the present study. Hovárth (2007), examining the persuasive strategies of president Obama's public speaking, demonstrates that the overall, underlying theme of politician's political speeches are inspired and empowered by the 'strength from the heroic past'. The point is that this heroic past should be used as a resort for rebuilding the nation in the time of the global financial crisis. The present study endeavoured to ascertain and investigate the language and philosophical position from which political facts are presented in political campaigns thereby establishing the rhetorical strategies employed in the discourse.

## 6. Methodology

The study employed a non-experimental descriptive analytical approach in which discourses from several presidential campaign rallies were examined. The qualitative research method was used. The corpus of the study consisted of the discourse from one of the leading presidential contenders of 2016 general elections in Zambia, who was selected purposefully. These data were collected from the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation, and Muvi TV. The study is essentially a qualitative content analysis and the instrument of research was the researcher herself. The discourse was obtained by getting the recordings of the different campaign rallies conducted across the country between 11<sup>th</sup> May and 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016. Then excerpts were selected at random, transcribed verbatim and then analysed. In applying the content analysis, the steps of analysis by Creswell (2009) were followed. The data was read through and a detailed analysis was conducted. Then a description of the themes was generated making interpretations or meaning of the data. In addition, the study employed the SFG analytical framework in the analysis.

## 7. Results and Analysis

The analysis of the discursive practices done on the data is presented in this section. The findings reveal that the candidate under study employed allusion, propagandistic language requesting, and provocative language in his campaign discourse.

### 7.1 Allusion as a Discursive Practice

Allusion is an important discursive strategy employed by politicians to appeal to their sentiments and solicit for support. There are two forms of allusion that were identified in the 2016 presidential campaign discourse; social and historical. The two forms of allusion employed by the political candidate under study are examined below and their semantic implications established.

#### 7.1.1 Social Allusion

Social allusion essentially concerns reference to certain issues and truths in society. Such issues may have some significance of the past, the present or the future. Political

campaign discourse comprises a considerable number of social allusions because politicians try to provide factual information to the electorate in an effort to persuade and convince them. The discourse by the candidate under study drew largely on social allusion. In excerpt 1 below, the candidate employs social allusion as a discursive practice with the purpose of gaining support from the electorate by exposing the opponent's negative activities through elaborate discourse.

#### Excerpt 1

In January 2015 the kwacha was trading at K6 to the dollar, it is now at K10. Inflation was 7% and today it is 22%, with bags of mealie meal selling at over K100 and the pump price of fuel up to K10 per litre. Here on the Copperbelt, instead of the thousands of jobs they promised to create we have seen thousands of job losses.

We have seen the danger of leadership that has no vision and the damage that can be done even in a short space of time.

Mr Hakainde Hichilema was speaking while launching his party's campaigns in Kitwe at Freedom Park. Discursive practices are manifested in the speech. The text makes reference to one major issue in the Zambian society, that of unemployment or job losses. The problem of unemployment, especially concerning the youth had been discussed in Zambia all the time. The speaker spent time explaining how the economy of the country had been negatively affected under the reign of the PF candidate Mr Edgar Lungu from 2015 when he took over as Republican president. The aim of the speaker is to downgrade his opponent that he was not supposed to be given a chance to continue with the next term, as he had allegedly not done well in the last year that he had been president. The speaker elaborates, *In January 2015 the kwacha was trading at K6 to the dollar, it is now at K10. Inflation was 7% and today it is 22%, with bags of mealie meal selling at over K100 and the pump price of fuel up to K10 per litre.* These are the issues that were of great concern to the citizens and were discussed from time to time since they affected the lives of Zambians negatively. This plea was to remind the electorate how the poor management of the economy had brought suffering to the citizens in the country.

This explanation is done discursively. There are particular words and phrases that are significant in the text. The speaker mentions 'danger of leadership', 'damage', 'no vision' and 'a short space of time.' The words and expressions listed here are crucial to the social allusion made in the text. These words give specific examples of how the country was mismanaged by the government at that time. The phrase 'danger of leadership that has no vision' and 'damage' indicate that the resources of the nation were not well managed which led to unemployment, which is a social fact. While 'no vision' and 'a short space of time' elaborates how bad the leadership was, giving evidence of the bad vices that were being done by the government that affected the economy of the nation negatively. These problems were well known social facts which were being highlighted time and again in the political domain. The intention of the speaker for making these allusions was basically to provoke the electorate to reflect upon the state of affairs in the nation and vote in favour of the speaker's party, which he presented as one which would not condone such bad vices. That is, it would work for the good of all the

citizens.

In addition, social allusion functions as a rhetorical device in that these words that present social allusion in the text are presented in a political rhetoric style.

The speaker also employs parallel structure in the utterance, *instead of the thousands of jobs they promised to create, we have seen thousands of job losses. Also ... have borrowed and borrowed.... and ... They have spent so much but delivered so little.* As a rhetoric device here, parallelism, in addition to calling attention of the audience, adds balance and rhythm and helps in clarifying and adding beauty to the sentences.

The aim of all these rhetoric pronouncements is at persuading the electorates to voting for the candidate who was speaking.

In the next line the speaker employs passivization with the utterance, *We have seen the danger of leadership ... and the damage that can be done even in a short space of time.* This expression is done discursively referring to the period January 2015 to the time of the campaign around May 2016, which was just a year that Mr Edgar Lungu had ruled, but the damage was greater. Therefore, the nominalization and passivisation the speaker employs by making use of social allusion are highly persuasive. As Michira (2014) <sup>[12]</sup> demonstrates, language is a formidable tool that politicians employ to communicate policies and ideological positions as well as to create certain insights in order to influence and manipulate the votes with a view to gaining an advantage over their opponents. With regards to polarisation, the views presented here are in line with Wirth-Koliba (2016) who demonstrates that the 'us' and 'them' relationship is constantly present in politics, therefore different means of constructing such relations are needed. The views are also in line with those of Kazemian and Hashemi (2014) <sup>[10]</sup> who submit that rhetorical devices investigated in the study are used as persuasiveness properties to improve the effectiveness, clarity, and beauty of the speeches.

### 7.1.2 Historical Allusion

The knowledge of history is important in politics, and as such historical allusion turns out to be an essential feature in political discourse. Historical allusion is demonstrated when speakers make allusions to historical facts in their speeches to emphasise on the points they make. Historical allusions are in essence influential proclamations that are used to build flashbacks in discourses. For the audience to comprehend the arguments being made through such allusions, they require some acquaintance of the contexts of the historical facts being delivered.

The candidate under study further took up the theme of discursive practices by employing historical allusion, considering the high cost of living that the citizens were facing in the country at that time. He did so by reflecting on his experience as a child and connecting his childhood experience to the suffering that was being experienced by the people at that time. He specifically focused on the high food prices and the diminishing agriculture produce. The speaker employed the skill of public speaking as elaborated in excerpt 2 below.

#### Excerpt 2

*When I am here in Southern Province I often think of my early days, I think of the journey I took to school each day and how fortunate I was to be able to go even though I was*

*just coming barefoot from the village.*

*With food prices increasing, profits for farmers squeezed by expensive fertiliser and seed and job losses resulting from load shedding and difficult business environment, there are many families not able to fully support their children through school today. This should be considered a national tragedy.*

The candidate began with a reflection of his early days in school in that area when life was not as difficult as was the case at the time when he was speaking. The speaker expressed himself by referring to history as a discursive feature and combining it with its rhetorical function. He made use of effective rhetoric devices in his campaign discourse. He started by employing parallel structure talking about himself having been able to attend school barefooted which was not possible in this age and era. The speaker alluded to the historical fact that life was easy during his early life in that particular area where he was addressing the electorate in Choma in the southern province of Zambia. *When I am here ..... I often think of my early days, I think of the journey I took to school each day .....* The speaker employed a series of parallel pronouns (I), verbs (think, took) and phrases (of my early days, of the journey, to school) in the sentences, which is highly persuasive. He ended this point by applying nominalization ... *even though I was just coming barefoot from the village*, in which he turns the verb barefooted to barefoot. Nominalization helps to cover many aspects in few words and creating certain impressions to the audience. In this case the speaker intentionally invited comparative investigation of the life when he was young and the life now (at the time of campaigning) by making use of historical allusion.

The speaker also pointed out that life had become difficult for the citizens as a result of poor agriculture policies and high food prices. The main message which the speaker wanted to convey to the electorate was that the PF government had failed to provide a conducive environment for the citizens to thrive economically. He brought out this aspect through negative *other* presentation, pointing out that the PF had failed to deliver. The speaker used the historical allusion to emphasise and authenticate his opinion since in the past (Kaunda's era for instance), the southern region of the country was doing fine in that they had enough to eat and surplus for sale due to good agricultural policies that were prevailing. He achieved this effect by making use of parallel structure as well as nominalization in ... *With food prices increasing, profits for farmers squeezed .....by expensive fertiliser and seed and job losses resulting from load shedding and difficult business environment,.....* The speaker makes use of nominalization by presenting the information in noun phrases (job losses and difficult business environment). The lexical items he makes use of such as 'food prices increasing', 'profits for farmers squeezed' and 'expensive fertilizer and seed' are employed to convey the message that life was more difficult in that present situation than it was in the historical situation. He employs the skill of public speaking.

The speaker developed the negative *them* presentation of his opponents by giving an exaggerated situation, *This should be considered a national tragedy.* This figurative expression is ideational grammatical metaphor which is aimed at exposing the damage done to the nation by the PF. As Simon-Vandenberg et al. (2003) submit, the process has been symbolised as things rather than actual happenings.

This perspective is accomplished by employing nominalization technique, IGM and negative *other* presentation, which are strategies to convincing the electorate that there was no hope for the PF as they had put the nation in a difficult situation. The elaboration of these techniques combined with the skill of public speaking and the exploitation of negative *other* presentation of the opponents, holds the attention of the electorate during the discourse.

The speaker further justifies his assertion as to why the situation should be considered a national tragedy through a detailed explanation in that the PF government was not able to provide an enabling environment for the future generations to thrive, so that in turn they would contribute positively to the nation. Here the speaker inferred that if left unchecked, the situation would lead the country into serious problems since the youths who would be the leaders of tomorrow would not realise their potential and such a situation would plunge the nation into jeopardy.

These views confirm those of Wirth-Koliba (2016) who avows that the deictic centre of a political speech that may be built depends on many factors, such as the goal of that particular part of the speech, that is, whether to warn, to persuade, to accuse, and so on. In this case the speaker constructs this speech to warn as well to persuade the audience. The deictic centre also depends on what resources the speaker has in hand, such as mental context models, joint experiences and beliefs, position/power, and so on. In this particular occasion, the candidate commands more power and control over the electorate. Finally, the deictic centre depends on the development of the communicative event, that is, prior sentences/fragments have influence on the ground for the ones that follow. The deictic centre alternate between the present circumstances focusing on the problems the speaker was addressing and the good old days when life was better.

The speaker picked on agriculture because people in this area depended on agriculture for food and income generation especially in the past years and hence the allusion to history. Now the people were not doing well since the government had not provided a conducive environment by delivering farming inputs on time. In addition, these inputs were very expensive such that many peasant farmers could not afford them. At the same time the food prices were very high making it difficult for the people to buy what they wanted to eat. So agriculture would have been the alternative in this case and hence the focus on it by the speaker. Hence the agricultural aspect is an allusion to history since it once thrived in Zambia's history.

These arguments are in line with those of Ekhareafo and Akoseogasimhe (2015)<sup>[4]</sup> who submitted that the appeal to history for the education of the electorate about the previous deeds of certain political contestants, making the campaigns evidence-based, the foregrounding of credibility matters and the emphasis on change serve as useful rhetorical appeals in the discourse. The speaker's appeal to history here serves as a useful rhetorical device to achieving persuasion by looking at how the agriculture sector thrived way back in history.

These findings tend to concur with those of Hovárth (2008) who demonstrates that the overall, underlying theme of political speeches is inspired and empowered by the 'strength from the heroic past', which should be used as a resort for rebuilding the nation in the time of the global

financial crisis and the threat of global terrorism. The text by the candidate focuses on the heroic past when the agriculture sector thrived and that can be a resort for improving the poor state of the agriculture sector in the country. In this case the discourse used by the candidate gave him authority in the field of politics.

Furthermore, these views confirm Rozina and Karapetjana's (2009)<sup>[15]</sup> submissions that the linguistic manipulation can be considered as an influential instrument of political rhetoric. In the text, the candidate manipulated language by employing historical allusion to appeal to the audience as a strategy to soliciting for support of the electorate.

## 7.2 Propagandistic Language

Propaganda is a crucial attribute in political discourse. It is a feature of the language of politics which exposes the manipulative power of language. Propagandistic language may be positive or negative. Since politics usually concerns itself with struggle for power, political candidates and political parties deliberately use language either to castigate their opponents in order to advance their ambitions or to air certain facts or ideas about their own activities. These forms of propaganda were manifest in the present study in the discourse by the candidate under study.

In excerpt 3 below, the candidate makes use of propagandistic language by presenting his opponents, the PF negatively and demonstrating that the PF were doing the things he had been advocating for, imploring the electorate to vote for him.

### Excerpt 3

*I am happy that the PF government has started reversing and implementing the same things I keep talking about, although most of them are being done in a wrong way.*

*I have told the nation that I will unconditionally reinstate all the fired nurses, and today the PF government have recalled the nurses. I told them that I will recognise Chitimukulu, the PF now are also saying they have started the process. I have said that I will reverse the retirement age from 65 to 55, and now the PF are also saying they will reconsider the decision.*

*I have said that I will reduce food prices, the PF are also saying they will do the same. I have said that I will drastically reduce the cost of fuel because the cost on the international market has drastically reduced, they have started making minimal fuel reductions. I have said that farmers need to be paid for their produce and not be arrested, at least some have started receiving payments.*

Mr Hichilema was speaking in Chilanga where he addressed a mammoth rally. He began by discursively elaborating the activities he had been talking about concerning the nation through positive *us* presentation and self-glorification. He explained that he had been telling the nation that once elected president, he would reinstate the nurses, recognise Chitimukulu, and reverse the retirement age from 65 to 55. He added that he would reduce the food prices and cost of fuel, and would pay farmers on time for their produce. For each point that the speaker brought out, he added propaganda to it, in that he explained that he was happy that the PF were beginning to do the same things. The speaker achieved this propaganda by employing parallel structure and modality in the construction of these sentences to capture the attention of the audience in which he was expressing polarization. He further made use of the first

person singular pronoun *I* with the modal *will* as follows: *I told the nation.....I will; I told the PF..... I will; I have said that I will....they also said they will....*

The expressions above are a typical example of negative propaganda in political discourse. In the text, the speaker presents his opponents in a bad light with a view to gaining support for himself and his party.

In addition to parallel structure and modality, the speaker made use of passivization, nominalization and IGM as follows: *....all the fired nurses, the retirement age....and .... I have been preaching about....* By employing these rhetoric devices, the speaker manages to condense the information but achieving the impression that he wanted to achieve in the audience.

The positive propaganda of himself and of his party presented by the speaker is an exaggeration. He promises that he is concerned with the plight of the citizens but this could have been mere rhetoric. The utterances therefore, almost always, are made to serve the immediate purpose – that of persuading the electorate to vote for a politician or political party without serious commitment to the locution made (Ademilokun, 2015) <sup>[1]</sup>.

The function of this discursive elaboration is revealed when the UPND leader uses self-glorification about himself regarding the political acceptance country-wide. Mr. Hichilema wondered why he could therefore not be given a vote since he was already, in a way, giving leadership in the country and was allegedly already widely accepted everywhere he had been. He further used negative *them* presentation on the PF by implying that they were campaigning like they were in the opposition and not in government to do the things they were also promising the people of Zambia. According to Mr. Hichilema, he deserved to be voted for as he was seemingly the best candidate given the activities he had done that far.

Furthermore, the speaker uses the discursive practice by focusing on the crucial areas and issues that were affecting the citizens in the nation. He talked of reinstating the nurses, showing concern with the health of people, and reversing the retirement age being concerned with the welfare of the citizens and their future. The reduction of food prices and fuel cost is the backbone of a nation's economy. Since the livelihood of people depend on these, the UPND preaches on them by first employing positive *us* presentation of himself and his party and then employing negative *them* presentation of his opponents. These polarised views are powerful persuasive strategies to winning support of the electorate.

The analysis of this text affirms Hovárth (2008)'s views that in time of crisis, politicians tend to resort to rebuilding the nation basing their strength on the heroic past. The UPND observed how the country's heritage was slowly diminishing. The speaker therefore recounts back at some past good practices of the nation including respect towards traditional leaders, good conditions of service of employees, and the reduction in food prices and other amenities for good livelihood, which were once upon a time good compared to how they were at that time. The idea is that if things were good some time back, they could still be revamped for the benefit of the citizens. All this was done through propaganda devices by making use of positive *us* presentation and negative *them* presentation of the UPND and PF respectively.

The analysis also concurs with what Wirth-Koliba (2016)

revealed; that the means by which the relations of *us / them* are structured depend on the speaker's intentions in the discourse, which in turn determine the way the 'us' and 'them' are presented. Moreover, relationships of inclusion and exclusion within a single discursive event are dynamic and prone to alternations, since motives behind and implications of particular fragments which constitute the discursive event as a whole, may vary. In this case, the speaker employed the *us / them* aspect as a rhetorical device to achieving persuasion by speaking good of himself and the party while speaking ill of his opponents, the PF.

Furthermore, the findings are line with Ademilokun (2015) <sup>[1]</sup> who reveals that while political discourse is an effective platform for political struggles and power play, it also highlights the cultural, linguistic, and social factors which has a bearing on the language use of political actors. Ademilokun further affirms that political candidates employ discourse strategies such as allusion, propaganda devices and provocative language among others. The candidate in this text, made use of propaganda to achieve persuasion in his discourse.

### 7.3 Requesting as Discursive Feature in Political Discourse

Requesting is one of the discursive features that were observed in the presidential campaign discourse of 2016 elections. The candidate under examination employed different lexical items in his discourse as he was soliciting for support from the electorate. An example of how the UPND endeavoured to gain control over the electorate by employing the discursive feature of requesting is presented below. This was achieved by drawing the attention of the audience to improving their plight. The UPND candidate makes use of the discursive feature of requesting as a campaign strategy by promising to deliver electricity to rural areas to enhance productivity and does so discursively in the excerpt below.

#### Excerpt 4

*One area where government must work harder for the benefit of our people is in delivering electricity to areas such as Mwinilunga. They must be connected to the national grid to enhance productivity in the area and improve the business environment. This is essential so that jobs can be created and our people can produce goods locally, without the need to rely on expensive imports. The PF has been asleep at the wheel, only waking up for election time but we in the UPND are serious about delivering development for our people here. So people of North Western we are asking you today on 11th August you have a choice—vote for a UPND government that will work tirelessly to eradicate poverty or vote PF to continue in reverse gear under a president with no vision.*

The UPND candidate was campaigning in Mwinilunga, one of the districts of North western province. The speaker gives hope to the people of North Western province by promising them rural electrification, and connects the provision of electricity to enhancing productivity and business environment. He promises, *one area where government must work harder for the benefit of our people is in delivering electricity to areas such as Mwinilunga*. The aim of giving this promise was to solicit for support in the August 11, 2016 elections. The speaker requests the electorate to vote for him in the utterance. He further

stressed the point he wanted to deliver home by emphasising on the fact that the provision of electricity would help improve the welfare of the people since they would produce goods locally without importing where they would be required to spend a lot of money. This provision would therefore enable Zambia to prosper and the speaker wanted to deliver this message to all Zambians. The speaker presents himself positively in that he is committed to doing good for the people and the nation at large, once elected, by stressing that .... *so that jobs can be created and our people can produce goods locally*. The speaker continues to *other* the PF by making use of IGM with the phrase ... *The PF has been asleep at the wheel, only waking up for election time*. The metaphorical expression used here is a rhetorical device with serious negative implication of the ruling PF, in that if one is driving (at the wheel) and falls asleep, what is being driven can lose direction or crush altogether. The speaker therefore, alleges that the PF did not have much to offer to the people of Mwinilunga. This view implies that the PF, instead of driving the economy in the right direction, had been doing contrary things, concentrating on their selfish ends, only to realise that it was time of election again. So they (PF) had to find a way of convincing the electorate to vote for the PF since they still wanted to remain in power, since they *had been asleep for sometime at the wheel*.

The speaker then skilfully turns to positive *us* presentation of himself and his party, ... *but we in the UPND are serious about delivering development for our people here*, which he exploits by use of the first person plural pronoun *we* and the genitive adjective *our*, showing commitment to the people. The speaker employs good diction as he is able to combine lexical items carefully and articulate issues to the conviction of the people thereby achieving persuasion. The speaker goes on to hitting the nail on the head by directly requesting the electorate to vote for him .... *So people of North Western we are asking you today on 11th August you have a choice....* This elaboration is done through the discursive feature of requesting and with a view to convincing the electorate that as UPND they meant well to the citizens and that they would do everything possible to make the electorate happy. The speaker requests the audience to vote for him assuring them that by doing so they would help the nation and themselves, to be a strong nation again and all the citizens to live a better life and prosper. By making use of nominalization, such as *enhance productivity* the speaker manages to use fewer words but still giving the same meaning and creating the desired impression. The verb *produce* has been nominalized in a passive voice so that the stress is on the process and not the agent. These noun phrases are carefully chosen as persuasive strategies to capture the minds and hearts of the electorate to supporting the speaker. This is a powerful strategy in political rhetoric since this assurance would in turn help the UPND to gain political mileage and win votes for themselves and rule the country. At the end of the text, the speaker elaborates the 'choice' though indirectly, to the people of North Western province to choose between the promising UPND, his party thus; ... *vote for a UPND government that will work tirelessly to eradicate poverty* and the failed PF; ... *vote PF to continue in reverse gear under a president with no vision*. Given this discourse the speaker is simply telling the electorate to vote for the UPND for the good promises, *working tirelessly...* and to reject the PF for failed

leadership, *reverse gear*. Mr Hichilema achieves this through negative *other* presentation of the PF and positive *us* presentation of himself and his party (cf Andreassen, 2007) <sup>[2]</sup>. He thus ends by employing powerful rhetorical devices skilfully giving the electorate a choice to choose between a UPND that would 'work tirelessly to eradicate poverty' or continue in 'reverse gear' with the PF, which is a persuasive strategy to soliciting them to voting for UPND. Therefore politicians lean on the extremely polarised view of the *us* versus *them* expressions, where they themselves belong to the positively represented in-group and the opposing group is firmly placed in the out-group, negatively whenever possible (Andreassen, 2007) <sup>[2]</sup>. Besides, as Korhonen (2017) <sup>[11]</sup> submits, politicians use language to advance their political goals by employing the rhetoric of blame and bluster. This means that politicians thrive when they have someone to blame: an adversary or opponent of some kind that they could use to contrast their philosophy to, as well as accuse of foul play and divert attention to whenever possible. The UPND candidate blames the ruling PF, as they were his main contenders, for what was wrong in North- Western province, where he was addressing the electorate on this day. In addition as Ademilokun (2015) <sup>[1]</sup> further affirms, political candidates employ discourse strategies to win support of the electorate. The UPND in this text, made use of requesting as a rhetorical device to achieving persuasion in his discourse. This perspective is achieved after giving a discursive elaboration of how the area would be improved by electrifying it and benefits that come along with this electrification and that the ruling PF had done nothing to the area because of 'sleeping at the wheel'. The speaker then affirms that the UPND were serious about delivering development to the people of Mwinilunga and requests the electorate in Mwinilunga to vote for him and his party.

## 8. Conclusion

The discursive practices in campaign discourse, is used as a constructed practice and in particular political context to explain the complex relationships between the structure of texts and their implications. Therefore, politicians employ certain strategies such as using language discursively by employing certain discursive features as rhetorical devices to influence people's political and philosophical views for their own advantage. These discursive practices are expressed through features such as allusion, propaganda devices and requesting and yet others are articulated through polarisation of positive in-group presentation and negative out-group presentation. Besides, politicians exploit polarised expressions of positive *us* presentation of themselves and negative *them* presentation of their opponents to win support of the electorate.

## 9. Recommendation

The study recommends that there is need to do a comparative study of two candidates from different political parties to examine to what extent each would be persuasive in their election campaigns.

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