

Appraising Environmental Action in Political Discourse: A Nigerian Gubernatorial Example

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Abstract

While research has been growing in the linguistic analysis of environmental discourse in Euro-American and other international contexts, this paper focuses on the communication of an ecological vision by the governor of a Nigerian state, Lagos. Combining Appraisal Theory with Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis, the study aims to determine to what extent the government portrayed its actions as contributing to salvaging the environment. Drawing from data collected for a broader study, the paper isolates textlets (clauses and clause-complexes) from a corpus of 100 speeches spanning 29 May 2007 and 29 May 2015. While adopting an essentially qualitative approach under the framework of environmental humanities, the study supports its analysis with a bit of software overview and presents appraisal tables that illustrate the deployment of intentional ecocentric languaging in the speeches. Findings support the positive evaluation of the administration's initiatives and interventions on the environment, based on the appraisal categories of attitude, engagement and graduation.

Keywords: *Appraisal Theory, Evaluation, Environmental Humanities, Eco-Critical Discourse Analysis, Lagos*

1. Introduction

Climate change has been established as one of the most pressing challenges of the 21st century (Böhm & Sullivan, 2021; Gates, 2021; Dietz, Shwom, & Whitley, 2020; HRH The Prince of Wales, Juniper, & Shuckburgh, 2017; Romm, 2015; Tol, 2013; National Academy of Sciences, 2010). Accordingly, the environment continues to feature strongly in global political discussions on the short- and long-term sustainability of both human and nonhuman species alongside their natural habitats (Barthold & Bloom, 2020; Gottschlich & Bellina, 2017; Sachs,

2015; Seefried, 2015; Robertson, 2014; O'Connor & Gronewold, 2013; Agyeman & Evans, 2004; Haque, 2000). While such discourses have become quite sophisticated in the Global North (e.g., Klein, 2007, 2014), they are relatively recent issues in sub-Saharan Africa. This latter fact is unsurprising, since the region contributes the least to global industrial pollution – the biggest trigger for the altered climatic patterns and weather changes now causing havoc worldwide. In bids to address the problem, the United Nations has been organising a series of conferences aimed at committing countries to climate-change mitigation goals that require the cutting down of carbon emissions (<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/un-climate-conferences>).

Whether such commitments have yielded the desired results is not within the scope of this paper, which focuses on the appraisal of environmental issues within the context of Nigeria's Lagos State. Viewed as one of the more 'progressive' administrations in Lagos State, the Babatunde Fashola government lasted between 29 May 2007 and 29 May 2015 and devoted significant textual attention to the environment. This study revisits its portrayal of the environment using the concept of evaluation as articulated in Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). After the introduction, Section Two comments on the evolving concept of environmental humanities and some of the state government's efforts on the environment. While Section Three outlines the methods for the study, Section Four highlights literature on appraisal and evaluation. Section Five presents and analyses the data and discusses the findings, followed by the concluding section.

The Environment in the Humanities

The 'ecological turn' has led to considerable scholarship on the environment that utilises theories and methods from the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities (e.g., Bland, 2014; Grosso, 2013; Morgan & Healy, 2012; Fassbinder, Nocella II, & Kahn, 2012; Autio, Heiskanen, & Heinonen, 2009; Pennycook, 2004). Now generally accepted as the Anthropocene (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000), the present age has spawned various subfields of environmental research that traverse disciplinary boundaries, including environmental communication/sustainability discourse and ecocritical discourse analysis.

More recently, the evolving metadiscipline of Environmental Humanities focuses on appraising the interrelations between the human and nonhuman spaces that constitute the complex, highly dynamic web of life (Holm et al., 2015). Within this tradition is Digital Environmental Humanities (Travis et al., 2023), itself an offshoot of Digital Humanities – a research paradigm involving the incorporation of software in the methodological and analytical procedures of studies in the Humanities and the Social Sciences.

What these subdisciplines have in common is a commitment to mitigation of the impact of global warming through the reduction, if not outright elimination, of anthropogenic climate change, which has resulted especially from environmentally harmful industrial practices. Although Africa's material progress has been no match for the Western industrial explosion, the continent nevertheless equally suffers from the effects of a rapidly warming world, leading to its cooption into global governance regimes for cutting carbon emissions and promoting sustainable energy use.

Environmental Initiatives by the Lagos State Government

Gov. Babatunde Fashola's administration was reputed to have undertaken well-publicised policies for tackling climate change. Among these initiatives were the annual Tree Planting Day (July 14), the Climate Change Club and the Lagos Power Kids' Club set up in schools across the state, the Waste-to-Wealth Project, investment in solar energy and energy-saving lighting in government offices, and its yearly hosting of the Climatel Change Summit. As the administration neared its two-term end, it called for a one-off No Horn Day throughout the state on October 15, 2014 (see <https://www.thecable.ng/free-horn-free-day-lagos>). In the light of such initiatives, therefore, the government managed to identify as ecologically responsible via its promotion of ecocentric policies.

2. Methods and Theory

In this section, we highlight and discuss the study's methodology and theoretical framework.

2.1. Methods

As noted in the introduction, this paper emanates from a larger study that investigated the ecological identity of the Lagos State Government (LSG) from 29 May 2007 to 29 May 2015. The study generated a corpus one of

100 purposively selected speeches from which were analysed clauses and clause-complexes based on eight stories-we-live-by: ideology, framing, metaphor, conviction, erasure, salience, evaluation, and identity. Here, we focus on the story of evaluation. The 100 speeches were harvested from the former governor's personal website. The speeches were coded based on discursive field (e.g., environment, politics, economy & business, agriculture). Table 1.1 is a snapshot of the data for the larger study; it shows total number of speeches collected over the study period, as well as their areas of discourse and their codes. Thus, an extract or textlet coded ECB4, for instance, would be – in chronological terms – the fourth speech collected in a 'business and economy' context. Furthermore, the study utilised freeware/online digital humanities tools such as AntConc and Voyant Tools for overviews on the data for augmenting its qualitative analysis.

Table 1.1. Summation of Speeches & Discursive Fields

S/N	Year	Qty	S/N	Field	Code	Qty
1	2007	6	1	Agriculture	AGC	3
2	2008	38	2	Culture & Tourism	CUT	4
3	2009	13	3	Economy & Business	ECB	34
4	2010	12	4	Education & Development	EDD	1
5	2011	5	5	Environment & Energy	ENV	34
6	2012	10	6	Health	HTH	4
7	2013	9	7	Info & Comm Tech	ICT	1
8	2014	4	8	Political Economy & Development	PED	2
9	2015	3	9	Politics	POL	15
			10	Security	SEC	2
	Total	100			Total	100

2.2. Appraisal Theory (AT) and the Concept of Evaluative Language Use

Appraisal Theory (AT) is an extension of Michael Halliday's Systemic-Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) (Coffin & O'Halloran, 2005; Martin & White, 2005), which views language as evolving alongside its social functions. Accordingly, AT relates to the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions of language as developed in SFL (Halliday 1994, 1985), as well as to the language strata of discourse semantics, grammar/lexis, and phonology/graphology. Martin and White (2005) state that AT accounts for evaluative language use in "discourse semantics" (p. 10). With regard to English, the authors identify and analyse a wide range of appraisal resources under the categories of Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation.

Attitude accounts for our feelings and emotional reactions towards phenomena, together with how we judge behaviour and evaluate things, actions and people – all corresponding to the subcategories of Affect, Judgment and Appreciation. Engagement concerns the value position taken by the speaker in relation to the topic or participants in the discourse as well as the potential response to it. Engagement resources include projection, modality, concession, polarity, and comment adverbials. Graduation involves the gradability (i.e., raising, lowering, sharpening or softening) of appraisal resources. Graduation resources include intensification, comparative and superlative morphology, repetition, as well as a diverse range of graphological and phonological elements. Appraisal Theory has been productively applied in discourse analysis. For instance, in Nigerian political discourse, Ademilokun (2016a) analyses attitudinal meaning in a presidential inaugural speech, while Ademilokun (2016b) examines appraisal resources in three concession speeches given after defeats in gubernatorial elections in Lagos, Osun, and Ekiti states.

Based on the analytical framework provided in Stibbe (2015), evaluation is "a story about whether an area of life is good or bad" (p.17) and it is one of the stories-we-live-by that frequently operate subtly; it is about how people approve or disapprove of certain practices as well as products/services. With regard to his vision for the governorship as declared in his inaugural speech of 29 May 2007, as well as his mission in office as articulated across his speeches during his eight-year tenure, Gov. Babatunde Fashola managed to present a generally coherent policy on the

environment. Here we account for the appraisal resources built into the selected textlets, using tables that highlight engagement, graduation and attitude.

3. Data Presentation and Analysis

Owing to space constraints, the textlets comprising the data are not presented separately here but introduced in numbered form as the analysis proceeds. As a story about whether an area of life is good or bad, evaluation manifests in the use of positive and negative lexis to describe the story of economic growth/development and economic shrinkage respectively. Stibbe (2015) notes that evaluation works by means of appraisal patterns, which are “clusters of linguistic features which come together to represent an area of life as good or bad” (p. 84). More broadly, beyond issues of economic growth and development as measured in terms of the rather misleading Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (see Constanza et al., 2014), appraisal resources also account for how Governor Fashola frames the totality of the LSG’s efforts around the environment. For instance, when he uses lexical items such as *stifled*, *castrated*, *formidable obstacles*, *most effective*, *to promote*, *opening the door of opportunity*, *thrive* and *contribute from a position of strength*, it is easy to see that he is taking positions regarding the phenomena being addressed in the selected textlets. Indeed, the AntConc concordance query for ‘growth’ returned 149 hits, virtually all of which occur in the context of business expansion and profit maximisation (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: AntConc Word Count for growth



Similarly, the query for ‘development’ (see Figure 1.2) produces a staggering 470 hits, most of which are to do with progress in the sphere of business and this would not be surprising, for in his first inaugural speech (POL1) Governor Fashola had declared that he would be running a pro-business government.

In clause complex [1] there is a clear picture of the LSG’s perception of economic viability as positive, given the lexicogrammatical configuration of the textlet below:

1. I wish to assure the Private Sector of our readiness not only to listen but also to act promptly on genuine proposals, suggestions and perhaps constructive criticisms that will help us improve Lagos to become more economically-viable environment. ECB4

Figure 1.2: AntConc Word Count for development

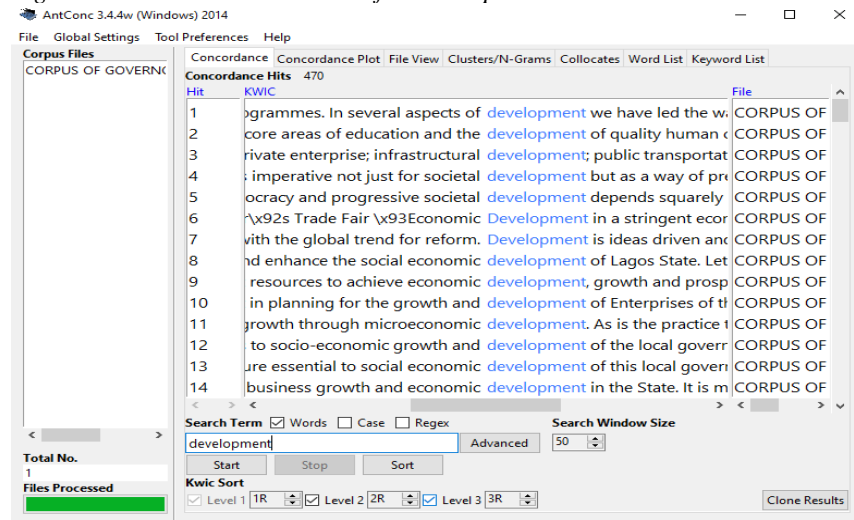


Table 1.2: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>readiness</i>	+	indirect
		<i>genuine</i>	+	direct
		<i>improve</i>	+	direct
		<i>economically-viable</i>	+	direct
		<i>to listen</i>	+	indirect
		<i>to act</i>	+	indirect
		<i>promptly</i>	+	direct
	Judgment	<i>constructive criticisms</i>	+	direct
Graduation	not only to listen but also to act		focus	sharpen

With the word *assure* the Governor commits to a confidence-building standpoint with regard to his interlocutor, “the Private Sector”. He then asserts the LSG’s *readiness* in taking measures that would ultimately benefit the said interlocutor. Syntactically, he deploys the additive conjunction *not only...but also* in stating the readiness *to listen* and *act promptly*; obviously, what is involved here is not just acting but doing so promptly as a further trust-building move. Moreover, the Governor evaluates potential offers from the interlocutor by using the attitudinal adjective *genuine* with *proposals* and *suggestions*, while also introducing

the evaluative word *constructive* before *criticisms*, itself an inherently negatively evaluated word. There is also the expression *help us improve Lagos to become [a] more economically-viable environment*, wherein the Governor commits to the proposition that not only is Lagos already economically viable but that the LSG would be willing to invest in efforts to make it even more so. Underlying this cluster of appraisal resources is the taken-for-granted assumption that economic viability is a positive goal for Lagos society.

In clause [2], the major appraisal resource at play is appreciation, under attitude, with the Governor continuing the positive semantic prosody for business:

2. Finally, I wish to thank the organizers of this Fair for the opportunity given Lagos State to show case and exhibit her industrial and economic potentials, through its participation and for the excellent arrangement made for all Exhibitors and visitors.
ECB4

Table 1.3: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>opportunity</i>	+	direct
		<i>showcase</i>	+	direct
		<i>exhibit</i>	+	indirect
		<i>industrial</i>	+	indirect
		<i>economic</i>	+	indirect
		<i>potentials</i>	+	direct
		<i>excellent</i>	+	direct
		<i>exhibitors</i>	+	direct
		<i>thank</i>	+	direct
	Affect			

First, the Governor uses the affect term *thank* to show his appreciation for the LSG's invitation to the Fair. Second, he uses *showcase* and *exhibit* to report the exposure of the state's "industrial and economic potentials"; a person is likely to display only what makes them proud. While *industrial* and *economic* are not inherently positively evaluated, as shown by the marking 'indirect' in the figure above, in the context of clause [2] these words are certainly meant to evoke positive appraisal, given that the modern industrial-economic hub is often held as a worthy goal for developing societies. Finally for clause [2], *excellent* is a direct appraisal term for the LSG's appreciation of the Fair organisers' efforts.

On the positive evaluation of economic growth in ECB4, the Governor uses the words *implore*, *continue*, *support* and *cooperation* to frame *the national dream* of achieving *economic prosperity*, *self-sufficiency* and *industrial development*, in clause complex [3] below:

3. I also implore you to continue with your support and cooperation as we work together to achieve the national dream of economic prosperity, self-sufficiency and industrial development. ECB4

With its rather religious undertone, the word *implore* presents the Governor as engaged in something like a messianic campaign to, sort of, get the “private sector” to toe the ‘worthy’ line. As such, the Governor urges the interlocutor “to continue” its supportive and cooperative work with the LSG.

Table 1.4: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>continue</i>	+	indirect
		<i>support</i>	+	direct
		<i>cooperation</i>	+	direct
		<i>dream</i>	+	direct
		<i>prosperity</i>	+	direct
		<i>self-sufficiency</i>	+	direct
		<i>industrial development</i>	+	direct
	Affect	<i>implore</i>	+	indirect
Graduation		national	focus	sharpen

No doubt, people pursue dreams rather than run away from them, hence the positive evaluation of the achievement of prosperity, self-sufficiency and industrial development. In the expression “national dream” the word *national* helps to broaden the focus, presenting it as something extending beyond the confines of Lagos State to the entire country.

The next set of textlets comes from ECB6. In clause [4] the Governor uses the unmodalised form “must review and restructure” alongside the positively evaluated infinitive *to promote* and the participial adjective “accelerated”:

4. In a similar vein, we must review and restructure our tax system to promote accelerated economic growth. ECB6

Table 1.5: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>accelerated</i>	+	indirect
		<i>economic growth</i>	+	indirect
	Affect	<i>promote</i>	+	indirect
Engagement		<i>must review</i>	+	modality
		<i>must restructure</i>	+	modality

Although *promote* is not a direct appraisal term, in the above context of *accelerated economic growth* it contributes to producing a positive semantic prosody in clause [4], since a reasonable political actor should normally only want to commit to a position that will help in achieving their political goals. In the present instance, the Governor believes that reviewing and restructuring the tax system is inevitable, if the already accepted ideal of economic growth must be speeded up. The infinitive *to promote* comes under affect because choosing to promote something is a matter of thinking and acting by someone.

Furthermore, in clause complex [5], the Governor negatively appraises lack of power supply for its role in impeding economic growth by describing it as a “protracted crisis of darkness”.

5. But we must not shy away from vigorously debating the issues in order to consider our options and find a lasting way out of the protracted crisis of darkness that is the greatest obstacle to Nigeria’s economic development. ECB6

Table 1.6: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>lasting</i>	+	indirect
		<i>protracted</i>	-	direct
		<i>crisis</i>	-	direct
		<i>darkness</i>	-	indirect
		<i>obstacle</i>	-	direct
		<i>economic development</i>	+	indirect
Graduation		<i>greatest</i>	force	raise

In the context of clause complex [5], the adjective *lasting* is a positive but indirect term of appreciation; it is taken for granted that Lagosians and other Nigerians desire a permanent solution to the problem of erratic

electricity, which is unproblematically presented as “the greatest obstacle to Nigeria’s economic development”. To be sure, obstacles are always meant to be overcome; moreover, the word *protracted* is inherently negative, hence its collocation with *crisis* in *protracted crisis of darkness*. Although *darkness* may not be regarded as intrinsically negative, given its usefulness for instance in certain experimental or photo-processing settings, the semantic prosody built up by the appraisal resources is outright negative, especially in relation to its imputed attribute as a hindrance to the supposedly much-desired “economic development”. The superlative adjective *greatest* also plays its own role in raising the force of the assertion about the role of “darkness” in keeping Nigeria economically underdeveloped. However, from an ecolinguistic perspective, a conspicuous omission in the entire speech is critical commentary not only on the unsustainability of current power-generation mechanisms but also suggestions on more sustainable means of powering the envisaged industrial processes.

In clause complex [6] the appraisal resources may be identified as follows:

6. One of the various projects the state has initiated to boost industrial growth and make the State investor friendly is the establishment of a Car Crushing Plant at Shalla in Epe Division of the State. ECB6

Table 1.7: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>projects</i>	+	indirect
		<i>industrial growth</i>	+	indirect
		<i>investor-friendly</i>	+	direct
	Affect	<i>initiated</i>	+	indirect
		<i>boost</i>	+	indirect
Graduation		various	focus	sharpen

Again, the Governor is here undertaking the rhetorical task of positively evaluating the LSG’s efforts on economic growth, with the car-crushing plant cited as one of its *various projects*, given that “projects” are usually seen as the dividends of democratic governance. In terms of affect, the LSG is said to be engaged in initiating useful ideas for boosting industrial growth and making the state ‘investor-friendly’. While *initiating* and *boosting* are not inherently positive in the English semantic system – for

instance, a political actor may in fact initiate an exploitative policy to boost the diversion of state funds into private pockets (e.g. construct a bridge with state funds and have tolls paid into private accounts under a dubious public-private partnership agreement) – in the context of clause complex [6] above, they carry a positive ring around them, since creating an investor-friendly environment will mean increasing business opportunities, ostensibly in the public interest.

In a speech given to transport stakeholders in the state on 6th May 2008, Governor Fashola deplored the challenges occasioned by the poor state of infrastructure in the state. He observed that the challenges had *limited* the state's *potentials* for *economic development*:

7. These [infrastructural challenges] have equally limited the economic development potentials and dignity of human lives in these cities. ENV4

Table 1.8: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>limited</i>	-	direct
		<i>economic development</i>	+	direct
		<i>potentials</i>	+	direct
		<i>dignity</i>	+	direct
Graduation		<i>equally</i>	focus	sharpen

As usual, *economic development* remains positively assessed, given the Governor's assertion that the said infrastructural challenges do nothing else but limit economic potentialities and human dignity. In a speech given 15 days later, the Governor spoke of plans to expand the economy and promote self-employment in the drive to achieve economic growth:

8. We wanted to open up the economy and encourage self employment and entrepreneurship which is the key to economic development in any nation. ECB7

Table 1.9: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>open up</i>	+	direct
		<i>self-employment</i>	+	indirect
		<i>entrepreneurship</i>	+	direct
		<i>key</i>	+	direct
		<i>economic development</i>	+	indirect
	Affect	<i>encourage</i>	+	indirect

Presenting himself rather as an expert on economic matters, the Governor asserts that opening up the economy and encouraging self-employment/entrepreneurship are necessarily means by which economic growth and development can happen. In the English-speaking world, people are praised for “opening up” rather than “being secretive” or “locking up”. Consequently, to open up the economy would be something positively appraised, since it presents the LSG as acting responsibly. Similarly, although the idea of self-employment might not in itself be directly positively appraised, it is clear in the context of clause complex [8] that countries capable of producing large numbers of self-employed people are deemed to be successful in growing their economies. And, of course, to describe something as *the* key to something else is to imply that both items are indisputably desirable. Moreover, the affect term *encourage* is also positively appraised in this context, even though it is also possible to encourage something negative.

In a speech given on 25th July 2008 to a conference of diaspora Nigerians on sustainable development (PED1), the Governor also positively evaluates economic growth and development. In the first of five textlets from the speech, he speaks about the impact on the economy of the billions of naira remitted to the homeland. Thus, in clause [9] the words *sustain*, *kith and kin* and *reflate* carry a positive semantic prosody:

9. They have been remitting billions of Naira back home over the years to sustain their kith and kin and reflate the economy. PED1

Table 1.10: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>sustain</i>	+	indirect
		<i>kith and kin</i>	+	direct
		<i>reflate</i>	+	direct

While *sustain* is positive in the above context, it is not in fact inherently so in the language system, since it is possible to sustain acts of injustice, for instance. For *reflate* and *kith and kin* there is no doubt about their direct positivity in the language system. For example, the Governor might as well have used a negative term like “hangers-on” or “freeloaders” to describe those back home in Nigeria who appear to be permanently dependent on support from the diaspora. To frame them as “kith and kin”, then, is to evince the impression of warmth and camaraderie among the senders and receivers whose exchanges then served to *reflate* a Nigerian economy that had been “deflated” by the global financial crisis of 2008, with the morpheme “de-” in “deflate” connoting negativity.

Clause complex [10] also comes from PED1:

10. The arbitrariness and inequities under military dictatorship, particularly during the mid 80s and early 90s stifled initiatives and castrated social and economic development that forced many virile and brilliant compatriots to flee the shores of this country in search of the proverbial golden fleece abroad. PED1

The above clause complex is obviously dominated by nonhuman participants, especially in the form of nominalisations. The subject of the sentence is the nominalisation *the arbitrariness and inequities under military dictatorship*. Used in relation to the affected participants in the

Table 1.11: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>stifled</i>	-	direct
		<i>initiatives</i>	+	indirect
		<i>castrated</i>	-	direct
		<i>social and economic development</i>	+	direct
		<i>golden fleece</i>	+	direct
	Judgment	<i>virile</i>	+	direct
		<i>brilliant</i>	+	direct
		<i>compatriot</i>	+	direct
		<i>flee</i>	+	indirect

clause, i.e. *initiatives* and *social and economic development*, the words *stifled* and *castrated* are clearly negative lexical items which suggest hindering the growth or flourishing of something that should normally thrive—in this case, entrepreneurial initiatives for profit-making through economic activities that constantly need to expand.

In addition, the above textlet not only highlights some of the reasons why many Nigerians went abroad in the first place but also reflects the speaker's attitude towards the participants and processes in the clause complex. Given that “initiatives” are generally positively evaluated, the Governor deplores the fact that they were *stifled* during the military era, thereby causing *social and economic development* to be *castrated*, another negatively assessed word. Also positively assessed is the expression “Golden Fleece”, which is something like a folk reference to all exertions meant to improve the individual's economic status in life. The Governor, therefore, reflects a positive attitude towards those who left the country during extreme economic circumstances. For example, he seems to justify their action of leaving the country by using the word *flee*, which suggests “running away from danger” and is thus a wise thing to do. He also positively evaluates such people as *virile and brilliant compatriots*; to use the word “compatriot”, rather than for example “traitors” or “cowards” or “unpatriotic people”, is to signal the Governor's positive judgment of their character. Consequently, there is always a positive semantic prosody for the LSG's activities as far as the ambience for doing business in Lagos is concerned, with the life-threatening implications of such growth and development apparently not being considered.

Again, the Governor uses another clause from PED1 below to appraise the military negatively for their role in hindering economic growth and development:

11. Even so, the vestiges of military rule are still with us doing damage to the concept of Federalism and stifling growth and development at the State and Local Government levels. PED1

Table 1.12: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>vestiges</i>	-	indirect
		<i>military rule</i>	-	indirect
		<i>damage</i>	-	direct
		<i>Federalism</i>	+	indirect
		<i>stifling</i>	-	direct
		<i>growth and</i>		
		<i>development</i>	+	direct

As the appraisal table for clause [11] shows, the *vestiges of military rule* are appraised negatively for causing *damage* to the positively evaluated *Federalism* and for *stifling* something as ‘noble’ and ‘worthy’ as economic growth and development. This negative semantic prosody further appears in clause complex [12] below:

12. These unitary practices severely hamper the autonomy and rights of states as components of the Nigerian federation and impeded their capacity to effectively discharge their responsibilities and promote rapid development. PED1

Table 1.13: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>unitary</i>	-	indirect
		<i>hamper</i>	-	direct
		<i>autonomy</i>	+	indirect
		<i>rights</i>	+	direct
		<i>impeded</i>	-	direct
		<i>capacity</i>	+	indirect
		<i>responsibilities</i>	+	direct
		<i>promote</i>	+	indirect
		<i>rapid</i>	+	indirect
		<i>development</i>	+	direct
Graduation		<i>severely</i>	force	raise
		<i>effectively</i>	focus	sharpen

While words such as *unitary*, *hamper*, *impeded* and *severely* negatively evaluate the country's military heritage, lexical items such as *autonomy*, *rights*, *capacity*, *responsibilities*, *promote*, *rapid*, *development* and *effectively* are used to relay the Governor's implicit faith in the capacity of state governments under a federal system to drive the process of economic growth and development. Speaking further on this theme, in clause complex [13] below the Governor uses several terms of appreciation:

13. In a plural society like ours where resources and responsibilities are centralized, the opportunities for needless bureaucracy and corruption present themselves and constitute formidable obstacles to development. PED1

On the one hand, plural, resources, responsibilities, opportunities and development are positive terms of appreciation. On the other hand, *centralised*, *needless*, *bureaucracy*, *corruption* and *obstacles* are negative terms of appreciation. With these lexical items, the Governor is able to set up a distinction between the unitary and federal systems of government with regard to either's capacity to promote economic growth and development.

Table 1.14: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>plural</i>	+	indirect
		<i>resources</i>	+	direct
		<i>responsibilities</i>	+	direct
		<i>centralized</i>	-	indirect
		<i>opportunities</i>	+	direct
		<i>needless</i>	-	direct
		<i>bureaucracy</i>	-	indirect
		<i>corruption</i>	-	direct
		<i>obstacles</i>	-	direct
		<i>development</i>	+	direct
Graduation		<i>formidable</i>	force	raise

Thus, within the **MHQ** structure of the nominal group *formidable* (M) *obstacles* (H) *to development* (Q), the qualifier 'to development' contains the affected participant, 'development'.

In clause [14] the Governor portrays himself as knowledgeable about the environmental crisis by highlighting the negative effects of biodiversity loss in terms of *wildlife* as well as *flora and fauna*:

14. The increasing threat of extinction of certain species of wildlife and flora and fauna and the disappearance of dinosaurs confirm the indisputable exhaustibility of nature's gifts. ENV7

With words such as *threat*, *extinction*, *disappearance* and *exhaustibility* he conveys the negativity of the situation, while using *gifts* as a direct positive term of appreciation. Under graduation, *increasing* raises the force of the claim made while *indisputable* sharpens the focus.

Table 1.15: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>threat</i>	-	direct
		<i>extinction</i>	-	direct
		<i>wildlife</i>	+	indirect
		<i>flora</i>	+	indirect
		<i>fauna</i>	+	indirect
		<i>disappearance</i>	-	direct
		<i>exhaustibility</i>	-	direct
		<i>gifts</i>	+	direct
Graduation		<i>increasing</i>	force	raise
		<i>indisputable</i>	focus	sharpen

From a speech given on 13th August 2008, just over a year since the governor assumed office, two extracts also illustrate the positive evaluation of economic growth and development. The first is clause [15] below:

15. In Lagos State, our effort in the past one year has been to transform and stimulate growth in the economy, by investing massively in the infrastructural development of the State. ECB8

Table 1.16: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>growth in the economy</i>	+	direct
		<i>development</i>	+	indirect
	Judgment	<i>transform</i>	+	indirect
		<i>stimulate</i>	+	indirect
		<i>investing</i>	+	direct
Graduation		<i>massively</i>	force	raise

The Governor talks about the LSG's commitment to both growing and transforming the economy, thus judging the administration as acting in the public interest by not only *investing* in the economy but also doing so *massively*. In clause [16] the Governor describes Lagos in the positive terms of a megacity:

16. As an emerging mega-city, with a population of over 18million, our focus as government is to jumpstart the economy by attracting and encouraging genuine foreign and local investors to invest in the state economy. ECB8

Table 1.17: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>mega-city</i>	-	indirect
	Judgment	<i>jumpstart</i>	+	direct
		<i>attracting</i>	+	indirect
		<i>encouraging</i>	+	direct
		<i>genuine</i>	+	direct
		<i>invest</i>	+	indirect

With population being a major factor per the megacity status, the Governor proudly claims 18 million as the state's population while asserting that the LSG has been focused on how to *jumpstart* the economy, very much as one does to a vehicle engine that fails to self-ignite. In addition, *attracting* and *encouraging* are also positive terms of judgment on the LSG's efforts to aid local and foreign investors who are judged as *genuine*.

In POL4, given two months later, the Governor claimed that the state had recorded tremendous success in 'taking the economy forward':

17. Indeed, the Lagos economy is experiencing a great leap. POL4

In English, ‘moving forward’ is inherently positively evaluated; as such, the nominal group “a great leap” is a metaphor for highly-welcome economic progress. With regard to moving forward on the economy, a set of three textlets from ECB18, given on 7th November 2008, equally uses appraisal resources. Clause [18] has the evaluative resources identified in the table below:

18. Trade fairs remain one of the most effective ways to promote the growth and development of the potentials in a developing economy such as ours. ECB18

Table 1.18: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>effective</i>	+	indirect
		<i>promote</i>	+	indirect
		<i>growth and development</i>	+	indirect
		<i>potentials</i>	+	indirect
		<i>developing</i>	+	indirect
Graduation		<i>most</i>	force	raise

Here, the Governor describes trade fairs as *most effective* in promoting the possibilities for economic progress in a *developing* economy. The word “potentials” is positively evaluated in this context, just like *promote* as well as *growth and development*. Contextually, *developing* is somewhat ambiguous, given that one may view the word as expressing a stable state or as emphasising ongoing progress. In any case, what was important for the speaker was that the LSG should be seen as taking the right steps to grow the economy as expected.

In clause [19], the Governor continues the positive semantic prosody for business:

19. By organizing a fair at the grassroots, you are opening the door of opportunity for business and enterprise to thrive and contribute from a position of strength for the overall development of the State. ECB18

Table 1.19: Appraisal Resources

Attitude	Appreciation	<i>thrive</i>	+	indirect
		<i>development</i>	+	indirect
	Judgment	<i>opening the door of opportunity</i>	+	direct
		<i>contribute</i>	+	indirect
		<i>overall</i>	focus	sharpen

Thus, in clause [19], *business*, *enterprise* and *development* are evaluated positively with a cluster of lexicogrammatical forms that represent them as worthy goals to pursue in modern society. That is, *opening the door of opportunity* for business and enterprise *to thrive* and *contribute from a position of strength*. The first expression is metaphorical: *the door of opportunity*, wherein “opportunity” is the tenor (ordinary term) and “door” is the vehicle (the metaphorical term). Additionally, the word “opportunity” itself is a positive lexeme; therefore, *opening a door of opportunity for business and enterprise* is certainly an instance of representing economic progress as good. Moreover, the expression *to thrive* is equally a positive semantic trigger, since we would be happy to allow something thrive only if it was in the presumed *overall* interest of society. And once it starts to thrive then business and enterprise can *contribute from a position of strength*, another obvious positive trigger in the clause complex.

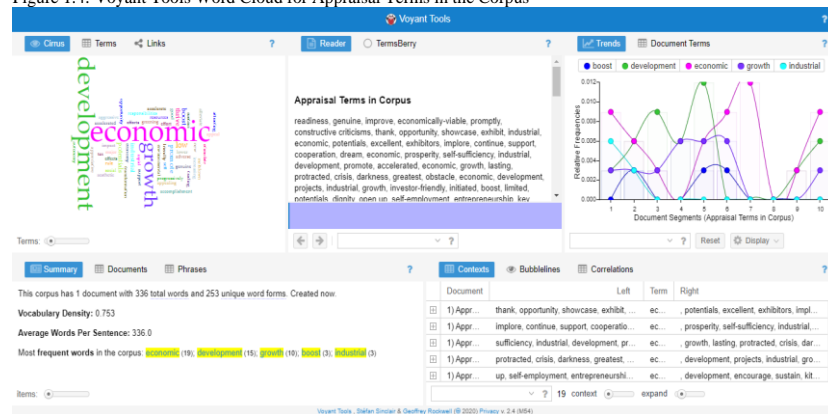
In clause [20], the third extract from ECB18:

20. The theme aptly captures the essence of the state government’s programme to stimulate growth and development of the economy through offering financial and infrastructural support to Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in the State. ECB18

the Governor also uses such positive judgment verbs as *stimulate* and *support* in relation to economic *growth and development*.

Following the foregoing analysis, the highlighted appraisal terms were manually compiled in a separate file and subjected to word cloud visualisation using the online-based Voyant Tools.

Figure 1.4: Voyant Tools Word Cloud for Appraisal Terms in the Corpus



The above figure indicates the preponderance of positively evaluated terms such as *growth* and *development* as applied to the *economic* sphere, alongside the affirmative framing of the Governor's actions on the *environment*. In most cases it was clear in the corpus that the government consciously sought to *accelerate* economic growth while also claiming to commit to *aggressive greening* of the environment.

Conclusion

To the literature on linguistic appraisal, this paper has added the dimension of environmental communication within a gubernatorial context in a developing country where ecocentric policies may not yet have become mainstream. Focusing on extracts from a corpus of speeches from different discursive fields as given over an eight-year study frame, the paper has offered a panoramic view of the thinking that informed environmental text/talk and action by the administration in question. Based on the foregoing analysis and discussions, the data illustrated the invariable positive evaluation of economic growth and development, presenting it as something to be desired under all circumstances. A wide range of affirmative lexical choices was selected to convey this idea of positivity. Consequently, even when the speechmaker does not expressly state that lack of growth is *bad*, words such as 'stifled' and 'castrated', when used in relation to 'economic growth', suggest that we should desire economic expansion and deplore the lack of it. Understandably, software

concordance queries for ‘growth’ and ‘development’ mostly related to progress in the sphere of business and the economy. Additionally, appraisal tables helped to highlight the appraisal resources of attitude (appreciation, affect and judgment), graduation and engagement, showing how these created an overall positive semantic prosody for the corpus. Perhaps to put things in perspective, however, further research might consider a comparative analysis of texts on environmental issues by the Lagos State Government and those by its counterparts for the same period.

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