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A DISCOURSE PRAGMA-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF INVECTIVE EXPRESSIONS IN GHANAIAN POLITICS

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Abstract
Decent use of language has been a common trademark in communication. It is such an aspect of human development that has been an important part in our societies since time immemorial. In recent times, this practice has contemptuously gone amiss due to our demanding need for democratic development. Recent development in politics in Ghana has witnessed a total change in the use of decent language to achieve the intended purposes in political communication. It is in this regard that the present study sought to examine the use of invectives in political communications in Ghana. The study adopted Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis theory to analyse the data gathered, which spanned from 2011 to 2016 and were taken from statements made by politicians that had been covered as major news items in the print media and online networks. In all, one hundred and fifty (150) bulletins of such invectives were identified and further categorised into descriptive, attributive and symbolic forms. Our findings showed that many of the noted politicians in Ghana made frequent use of invectives to seek political recognition that will prepare them for better political fortunes should the party they represent come to power in the future. It was further identified that all of these invectives were meant to cause emotional and psychological pains and also to lower the social status of the affected individuals so as to make them politically 'dirty' and irrelevant.

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1. Introduction

Politics has become just an aspect of our social lives since it deals with the sole activity of man and society in a much more civilised form. Mostly, every political activity relents itself to the growing needs of power and the exercise of control of resources as well as day-to-day role of the affairs of the entire community. Ezema (2009) admits that the idea of politics belongs to man's nature and the organisation of the affairs of a society for the common good of the society members. As a result, politics has become so relevant to human society that it is often asserted that man is a political animal (Ezema 2009:116).

In essence, the striving role of politics is hinged on ensuring that the needs of individuals and their societies are well taken care of. The entire fulcrum of politics is about ideas and how to utilise those ideas in bettering certain economic fortunes of ordinary citizens. Interestingly, the contemporary structure of human activity makes it possible for politics to be "essentially concerned with power and authority; how to obtain and appropriate it, how to make decisions and control resources within a jurisdiction, how to control and manipulate the perceptions, behavior and values of those who are governed, among other things" (Michira 2014:1) to the detrimental of the common needs of the ordinary citizens. As a result of this, people and other well-meaning citizens regard politics as dirty and the number one enemy to the survival of any nation's growth since it is often used to hinder development. Ezema (2009:116) admonishes, however, that . . . "politics in itself is not dirty. The problem is that some people play it in a dirty way. If it is played according to rules, people benefit immensely from it". This then suggests that politics is an important venture in one's life, except that it is the people involved that make the practice of it an unhealthy enterprise.

1.1 Politics and political system in Ghana

The nature of politics, which is about people's life, is further enshrined in the political system that exists in any giving society. Such a system ensures the use of proper governance structure to run the activities of the state. Most of the time, the political system of a state is fused with the legal institutions that make it possible for every political activity to function in a much defined environment devoid of any acrimony and injustice. The following is how Ezema (2009) puts it:

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> Every political system in a country strives as a duty to achieve peace, prevent social strife, lay emphasis on good citizenship, uphold justice and fair play and emphasize respect for people's fundamental rights, accepting as a fact that power belongs to the people and the exercise of it must be in conformity with the people's ethnics (Ezema 2009:116).

The underlining argument here is that political space of a nation must be cradled around a particular fundamental fibre that will make political system a better option in every governance structure. Such a need is manifested by the system of proper institutions that ensures that peace, justice and respect for people's rights and liberty becomes the ultimate function.

Interestingly, Ghana is identified as a unitary state with a presidential system of government where the President solely owns an executive power after winning an election through a universal adult suffrage. The other arms of government (i.e., parliament and judiciary) are also recognised in this respect, even though their respective powers are separated, including the executive, so that each one of them can provide an oversight responsibility on the other; apart from a few skirmishes that occur often times in such process. Unlike the judiciary which has an internal mechanism for appointing its respective members into various roles and positions, the parliament and the executive often have their occupants elected in an election supervised and guided by an independent body called the 'Electoral Commission'. As a result, they are recognised with a security of tenure for four years or more upon a renewal of another mandate by the electorate.

Quite fortunately, Ghana has had a stable and a solid political system of democracy under the Fourth Republican Constitution after several years of thunderous upheaval of frequent coup d'états and unjustifiable military interventions. Ghana's journey to democracy has, thus far, been smooth and perfect. Ghana's democratic credential as a giant in Africa cannot be underestimated in this regard. This is because, being the first country in the sub-Sahara to attain independence and to champion the struggle for independence for other Africa countries, Ghana has successfully organised eight consecutive general elections under the Fourth Republic (i.e.,1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020). Even though some of these elections have been clouded with minor issues such as intimidation, victimisation, assault, vandalisation of properties and many others, yet Ghana's ability to organise free and fair elections has received global recognition and admiration from the entire world, considering the volatile nature of African elections. As a

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result of this feat, the country has been the proud oasis of rule of law, respect for human right, freedom of speech and expression, free and fair election with democracy and accountability as its ideological ethos. This development has given massive credit and applause to the country, thereby giving a clear-cut credence to it as a 'modern home' for democracy in the sub-Sahara Africa and Africa as a whole.

The Fourth Republican Constitution has also witnessed an avalanche of political parties; there has been a proliferation of parties and this is ingrained in fairness and transparent electoral process. These political parties (such as the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the National Democratic Congress (NDC),Convention People's Party (CPP),People's National Convention (PNC), Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP), People's Heritage Party (PHP), People's Convention Party (PCP), National Convention Party (NCP), National Independence Party (NIP), National Convention Party (NCP), Ghana Redevelopment Party (GRP), Democratic People's Party (DPP), Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere (EGLE Party), Ghana Freedom Party (GFP), Ghana National Party (GNP) All People's Congress (APC), Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), Progressive People's Party (PPP) and a few other independent candidates for the past twenty-nine years) have been contesting for the ultimate (power) under this dispensation. Although Ghana is a multi-party sectorial state, it is two parties – i.e.; the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) which are the main political parties and have therefore been alternating powers over the years. The other parties, described as minor ones of which some of them have faded out of the system for non-performance, have had the difficulties to wrestle power from the two main parties because of lack of supportive-numerical strength and the fact that they do not have enough financial muscle to monetise their campaigns with gifts and other accoutrements to enhance their chances of snatching power from the hands of NPP and NDC.

In all of these, however, Ghana's political system is raided by the winner-takes-all syndrome. Gyampo (2015a:17) defines the winner-takes-all politics as "the partisan monopolization of state resources, facilities and opportunities, as well as the exclusion of political opponents from national governance". The nature of this system has become a pervasive phenomenon as well as a perpetual problem that the country is struggling to nip from the shell. This practice occurs most often because the party in power is identified with the sole responsibility to appoint all its members into various positions of authority whether those appointees have the requisite expertise or not. Under this situation, the losing parties are left out of consideration. Such development often times brings "conferment of excessive powers on the president, marginalization of perceived political opponents and

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the feeling of exclusion from the governance process by those who do not belong to the government/ruling party" (ibid.). According to Abotsi (2013), the idea of the winner-takes-all politics provides a great sense of security threat to the country and also serves as a form of disincentive to the growing need of Ghana's democracy; and therefore, gives enough impetus to the opposition parties, which happen to have various forms of antithetical opinions and political ideologies, to overtly speak against the policies and programmes of the party in power without necessarily examining the core benefits that the ordinary masses are likely to derive out of the successful implementation of some of these policies and programmes initiated by the ruling government. In effect, this practice of political greediness has economically weakened Ghana's developmental agenda over the years, resulting in tension, acrimony and rancor in the country's body politics (Gyampo 2015b:2).

1.2 Language and politics

Naturally, humans make use of language as one of their social needs. As a result, the power of language makes humans so distinct and different from all other creatures in the world (Agu 2015:65). In this respect, language is seen as an indelible part of human activity and essentially, an inevitable component of human life. Sapir (1963:162) aptly puts it as follows:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. . . (Sapir 1963:162).

This means that in reality, language only exists with the people and the society that they live. The scope of every language used in context helps to "demonstrate sensitivities to the vagaries of social experience, and the need to comply with the cultural rules of communication" (Yankah 1995:46). In principle, the core and normative force of a language is premised on the reality of arbitrary items that has been conceptualised by the people who use it in achieving particular communicative effects. This development provides a desirable role of language in helping human beings to build interpersonal relationships in the societies in which they live and to promote a peaceful co-existence among the people as well. As such, the use of a language has certainly become fashion for

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people to communicate and to share experiences of the world together. This helps in the presentation and exchanging of ideas for various purposes. In effect then, language is seen as an undoubted natural instrument that helps in seeing and developing human experiences of the world.

In essence, our social life as people is often preoccupied by a political thought. This is because we have needs and wants to be provided with in any account by people in higher authorities. As a result, language is used as a common trademark in expressing those demands and making such demands a life driven reality. In principle, language only exists with the people and the society that they live. Sometimes too, the scope of a particular language used can promote a demonstrable need for political sensitivity. It is with this development that has made language a core fibre to every political situation as well as becoming the only means to source for power. According to Dahal (2000), language is noted as follows:

> [It] is a voluntary vocal system of communication between individuals, groups and socio-cultural phenomena, politics, being a part of the entire social system, does not remain unaffected by linguistic environment. Language and politics are closely related to one another and the former is one of the determining factors of the latter (Dahal 2000:155).

This means that politics exists because there is language to be used to carry out its intended message and to make it happen in people's life. Since politics is about the development of the social needs of the people, language serves as the best medium to execute such essential needs of the people whose betterment remains paramount in this respect. In effect, language and politics are seen as two inseparable entities in human life since the two items are important ingredients for the flanking development of democracy.

Within the political space, the core function of a language is to provide information on the ideas, and the policies of the political parties, whether in power or opposition, and also to serve as a source of propagandist's tool to massage information to the people. This is because the political communicators use language as an avenue to explain and make available to the people all the important functions that the party has engaged itself with, within the context of a given political environment. Such a development always provides enough bases for a good political milieu to strive with specific relevant information for the people.

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1.3 The use of invective expressions in Ghanaian politics

Even though using language is indispensable in every human activity, it is gradually becoming a very dangerous arsenal in our human relationships in Africa and other parts of the world, all because of politics. The political activities in Africa are subdued and polluted with expressions which are full of acrimonies and other irate forms of discoursal indecencies meant to abuse an individual or a political opponent. Such a development, over the years, has been used as a canal for political violence in some part of the Africa; and has further threatened the "social values of communication, leading to a creeping culture of combative discourse, and the celebration of verbal abuse and invectives on decent political platforms" (Yankah (2011) as cited in Danso & Edu-Afful (2012:116)). One major bloat on the continent (of Africa), when it comes to the negative effects of invective expression in the media is the sad event which occurred in Rwandan where millions of innocent people lost their lives and properties because of the preponderance use of some heavily invective-laden speeches (Agyekum 2004:345) and its subsequent misinterpretations by the general public.

Quite importantly, it needs to be established that political invectives pre-dates Ghana's independence and its political activities (Boateng 2018). However, the Fourth Republic has unfortunately been characterised with unprecedented political invectives in public discourse. Several factors have been adduced as influencing this unfortunate development in Ghanaian politics. Some of these factors include the liberalisation of the airwaves, the repeal of the criminal libel law in 2001, socio-political recognition and rewards given to those who immerse themselves in political invectives. In this regard, politicians in Ghana have continued to use invectives to score cheap, and parochial political gain without recourse to the value of Ghanaian traditional practice in language use. This unsavory development has attracted the attention of well-meaning Ghanaians from all walks of life, who have been quick to condemn the use of invectives in our body-politics as it threatens the peace of the country. Key institutions in the country such as the National Media Commission (NMC), Ghana Journalist Association (GJA), Christian Council, Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and the National Peace Council (NPC) have all added their voices to the call for decorous language in political discourse in the country. Mr. Jerry John Rawlings, a former president, metaphorically described a section of insulting young politicians in the NDC party as '*babies with sharp teeth*' to register his

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disgust with the use of abusive language against perceived political opponents and other party members, yet the phenomenon still persists.

Yiannis (1998:3) sees the use of these invective expressions as part of the political behaviour of every well-meaning politician and that these invective expressions normally occur in the form of "oral or written, direct or indirect, – and gestural or non-gestural, which is perceived, experienced, constructed and most of the time intended as slighting, humiliating, or offensive, which has the potential of psychologically affecting not only the addressee or target but his/her associates". Interestingly, Agyekum (2004:347) also indicates that invectives have become key items in political communication and continues as follows:

> [Invectives] take the form of 'linguistic warfare' between participants in a communicative situation. In this metaphor, the participants are to be perceived as the combatants and the weapon as the language they use to psychologically affront and hurt the feelings of one another. The abusive expressions throw quasi psychological bombs at the hearts of the opponents and intend to damage their emotions. Invectives tarnish and curb co-operation between people. It is the antagonistic nature of the verbal expressions and their effects that are considered as verbal taboos. Thus, invectives potentially serve to undermine peace in society (Agyekum 2004:347).

As has already been variously suggested, the core fibre of invectives is intended to insult, create ethnic disparity, incite, create divisive anchor, – and promote ethnocentric activity. This is because the kind of politics being practised in this era is characterised by "failure to adhere to the norms of society, a high degree of partisan fragmentation and the extent to which political antagonism is carried into individuals' personal lives" (Frimpong (2017) as cited in Bentil & Aidoo, (2018:11)). As such, various political parties used invectives as a discoursal choice they make and that the basic requirement they have to encounter in using the language in political platforms is to use them (the invective expressions) to cast slurs on their opponents or their own party members.

Unfortunately, invective expressions are found to be part of the structural development of most politicians' diction in Ghana. Even those who happen to have been brought up from decent homes have eventually ended up being victims of these adherent practices the very day they enter into the school of partisan politics. This phenomenon has

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become part of Ghana's archetypal and everyday social life situations in the political landscape even though the cultural norms consider it as atypically non-Ghanaian (Dalton 2013). Possibly, it appears that Ghana's political system is meant to breed not people of integrity, but rather individuals whose sense of appropriate communicative behaviour signals disrespect, offensive and abusive attitude, which further seek to defy the context of our socio-cultural beliefs and traditions. The development of this practice constitutes an aspect of impoliteness in the community. According to Bousfield (2008),

> . . . impoliteness constitutes the issuing of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive verbal face threatening acts (FTAs) which are purposefully performed unmitigated, in contexts where mitigation is required, and/or, with deliberate *aggression*, that is, with the face-threat exacerbated, 'boosted', or maximized in some way to heighten the face damage inflicted (Bousfield 2008:261).

In Ghana, a member of a political party earns praises and admirations from his/her party's supporters any time such a member engages himself/herself in the use of invective expressions against their opponents in discussions. Since some of these discussions have become fertile grounds for members of political parties to attack, provoke and dehumanise political opponents, there is always the general tendency for a negative reaction or response in the form of verbal attack or physical violence among party members (Marfo 2014:526). This is because the lives of the individuals who have been attacked are carefully reviewed so as to highlight the negative aspects and to distort as skillfully as possible the positive ones (Okpewho 1992:32). In this case, such invective expressions remind the individuals of some painful events or facts about themselves or their relatives living and/or dead that they may not want to recall them (those painful events or facts) because of their bad nature (Agyekum 2004:347). This form of 'linguistic warfare', which is seen as an affront to Ghanaian culture and social standard, carries emotional pains and psychologically hurts the feelings of the affected parties (ibid.) under the onslaught of political abuse. As a result, it has thrown a quasi-psychological bomb at the heart of many well-meaning Ghanaians and consequently affected their peaceful relationship with others as well (ibid.).

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2. Theoretical framework

The present study employs the broader framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory, which was championed by Roger Fowler, Guther Kress, Norman Fairclough, Paul Chilton, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk and many others (see Agyekum (2004); Ofori (2015)). The central role of this theory is centred on human discourse from various perspectives (such as institutions, media and politics) as a social activity and examines how a language is used within a particular communicative context to reflect the generality of the speakers' intentions. By this development, the value of CDA theory is the examination of "the context of communication: who is communicating with whom and why; in what kind of society and situation, through what medium; how different types of communication evolved, and their relationship to each other" (Cook 1992:1). In respect of this relation, the nature of the study limits itself so narrowly to Fairclough's (1995), which seeks to provide interconnectedness between language, social activity and political thought in all aspects of human lives (Ofori 2015:64).

Fairclough's theory has a three-dimensional approach to the analysis of any discourse, namely discourse-as-text (which covers the structure and the manner in which the structure of the discourse is combined and sequenced), discourse-as-discursive practice (which deals with how discourse is produced, distributed and used in a society) and discourse-as-social practice (which manifests in the form of the social and cultural goings on which the communicative event is part of) (Fairclough 1995:57; Ofori 2015:64–5). The nature of this three-dimensional approach only forms a canyon that enforces the kind of language used to create and produce social realities in order to observe possible situations in life. This study exploits all the three-dimensional approaches for its analysis since the study attempts to examine a specific socio-political activity in Ghanaian society and the wider context of institutional practice that invective expressions are embedded within (Fairclough 1995:62). Also, these three dimensions are going to provide a much more relevant development to the fact that deals with the overall linguistic analysis of textual organisation of "mediatized political-invectives" (Agyekum 2004:350) that expresses a general tendency and produces an ideological effect in the Ghanaian political environment. Since the researchers intend to examine invectives in political discourse through the media landscape, this theory is therefore seen as centrally relevant to underscore the way language is politically used to denigrate, humiliate and condemn the target individuals (ibid.:347–8), as well as to criticise, undermine and vilify some political actors with potentially dangerous consequences (Richardson 2007:53).

3. Methodology

The data used for the study were obtained from reports in newspapers (such as *The New Statesman, The Informer, Ghana Palaver, The Al-Hajj, Daily Searchlight, The Catalyst, Daily Post, The New Voice, The National Democrat* and *The Chronicle*) and other political commentaries from online portals (which include *ghanaweb.com, myjoyonline.com, peacefmonline.com, adomfmonline.com* and *myradiogoldlive.com*) and radio stations (*Adom FM* and *Asempa FM*) by members of various political parties. These outlets are privately owned enterprises with different ideological outputs (thus pro-party agenda). These ideological stands affect the type of mediatised political invectives (Agyekum 2004:357, 350) that they sell to the people. As such, most of the news items being carried out are moulded by the value systems that are ingrained in the media spectrum (Fowler 1996:14) as well as being able to carry out stories that are mediated by discourse practices of which political invectives remain their focus in order to draw attention to themselves in the public space (Agyekum 2004:352). Even though these media outlets pursue pro-party agenda to the core, they have interestingly remained fairly neutral in their reportage to the effect that they report on any news from each of the political divides without fear and favour (ibid.:357). As a result, they have been recognised by the larger Ghanaian society as official and authentic media institutions over the years, hence the choice for the selection in this respect.

In all, one hundred and fifty (150) pieces of news items were gathered which represented the use of the invective expressions in Ghana's political landscape. The data gathered spanned from 2011 to 2016 and were further analysed into their respective invective forms as categorised by Kodah (2012) which include descriptive, attributive and symbolic to reflect their core roles in the Ghanaian political discourse.

3.1 Data analysis and discussion

This section presents the practical development of the analysis and the discussion of the data collected with the various forms of invective expressions identified on the Table I below. However, the pictorial view of some key items of the data collected in respect of the current study is provided for in the appendix.

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Table I: Forms of invectives

Invective type	Frequency	Percentage
Descriptive	91	60.7%
Attributive	53	35.3%
Symbolic	6	4.0%
Total	**150**	**100%**

From the Table I, it was realised that 91 (60.7%) of the invective expressions were found under the descriptive type. This form of invective is used to deal with the description of physical appearance of an addressee. Such description only seeks to vilify the physical ability of the addressee(s) in a disparaging manner. In most cases, descriptive invectives are expressed with words that are highly sensational. They further promote an emotional outburst that leads to belligerent confrontation. The use of the language in this regard provides some form of scornful descriptions which have emotional and harmful effect on the affected individual. Many politicians use the descriptive type of invective expressions as a form of vituperative discoursal tool to render a certain sense of discomfiture within the space of the political environment. Some of these descriptive invectives end up creating a clear-cut enmity with its central aim of endangering and making a declarative attack on the personality of the most respected individuals in various political landscapes, thereby making those affected individuals debilitative in the eyes of many. In this respect, the study identified that Ghanaian politicians are much more enthused with the use of descriptive invectives since they use them (descriptive invectives) in an attempt to physically attack their political opponents or people they have disagreement with. Some key reported instances that were identified are given in (1)–(4) below.

1. NPP flagbearer is <u>visionless</u> . . .   (myradiogoldlive.com; November 21, 2012)
2. Nana Addo is <u>uncircumcised</u>.   (citifmonline.com; May 10, 2011)
3. Atta Mills is <u>impotent</u>.   (Daily Guide; May 25, 2011)
4. Atta Mills is <u>blind</u>.   (citifmonline.com; May 23, 2011)

The above statements are clear cases of descriptive invective expressions. In this attempt, the use of *visionless*, *blind, uncircumcised* and *impotent* is meant to cast a note of disrespect and functional disarmament on the addressees. The term *visionless* and *blind* are two synonymous words and are used with a common connotative reference to indicate that one has lost his or her sight of seeing things clearly. Giving such a heartrending description to

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the 'NPP flagbearer' and 'Atta Mills' is meant to politically suggest that they ('NPP flagbearer' and 'Atta Mills') have lost their focus and have no sense of direction to lead and control the affairs of the country. These derogatory references have a debilitating effect on the status of the addressees (Kodah 2012:3) and also serve as an offensive tool to threaten the faces of the addressees against public sympathy (Agyekum 2004:371). In the case of *uncircumcised* and *impotent*, one sees them as a classical example of phenotype expressions that are uttered to attack the physical development of the affected persons (that is 'Nana Addo' and 'Atta Mills'). Explaining further, circumcision is a near-universal custom in Ghana; so when a male child is born, the foreskin around the tip of his male organ has to be removed. This is often carried out by a specialised medical officer or a native doctor, commonly known as 'wansam' in the traditional setting. From a traditional perspective, when this exercise is done, the male-child is deemed 'clean' and he can then mingle with friends freely without any form of prohibition. So, with the expression, *Nana Addo is uncircumcised*, the pragmatic implication is that 'Nana Addo' as a person is 'unclean' or 'impure' and that he is not traditionally 'fit' to join the class of circumcised members or to engage in any social activity with those found in the circumcised group. This is because he is seen as someone who carries 'unpleasant load' which deforms his character and personality. Such an implicature makes 'Nana Addo' politically unworthy to lead and associate himself with some Ghanaians who have been 'cleaned' (circumcised) and to seek their mandate for his presidential bid. Also, in the Ghanaian society, a word like *impotent* is prohibitively noted as an unmentionable and a griot of unspeakable item (Kodah 2012:2) which cannot be talked about by members in their respective socio-cultural set up (Agyekum 2002:370). This is because it is traditionally surrounded with connotations and cognitive attitudes that make it impossible to be used in every speech situation (Farb 1973:91). However, when such expression is 'foolishly' uttered; it describes the powerless and unproductive nature of a man's genital organ. Such a description shows that the addressee is not a 'man' and 'sexually worthless' to the core. In effect, for this cruelly descriptive item to be used on 'Atta Mills' clearly devalues his status as a man and further shows that he is physically weak.

Using all of these negative expressions in this political situation was meant to give a pictorial description about the exact character of the addressees. In effect, these invective expressions are structured with a direct presentation of socio-political strives and innuendoes (Kodah 2012:2) that stretches to describe the qualities and the behaviours of the addressers (Agyekum 2004:349). Under this situation, there is a clear-cut concept of

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polarisation that is based on the ideological discourse strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (Bell (1998:65) as cited in Agyekum (2004:365)) where the 'Us' group is found to have engaged in the antics of "self-justification to the chagrin" (Kodah 2012:4) of the 'Them' group to underscore a cheap political interest. Therefore, attempt by politicians to engage themselves in 'Us' versus 'Them' phenomenon as a political culture is so disparaging and clearly shows that there is a total breakdown of the core moral values of the Ghanaian society. Interestingly, these scornful descriptions of individuals, all in the name of politics, are totally unacceptable and unnecessary. In a full aberrance to Ghanaian culture, the invective expressions used in this context were meant to promote a referential discomfiture and to further make the 'NPP flagbearer', 'Nana Addo' and 'Atta Mills' look politically 'dirty' in the minds of the general public. This is because a person's life is sometimes pictured by what people can be associated with easier so as to draw a conclusion on the person's character in and out of the political scene. Due to the nature of the present political situation in the country, some of these invectives have become a very common phenomenon among those who are expected to know better. As such, various politicians and party faithfuls see the use of descriptive invective expressions as a means to destroy the political fortunes of other members both within and outside their respective parties.

The other form of invective expressions that could be found on the table was attributive with its frequency rate of occurrence being 53 (35.3%). The attributive aspect of the invectives deals with all the circumstances of syntactic structures which serve as a modifying item. The attributive invectives are found to be in the form of a noun phrase construction, which could be viewed with a number of combinations just to formulate different vistas of stylistically incongruent units (see Huddleston 1988). These include 'the noun head as the only obligatory element (Ø + NH)', 'pre-head item + the noun head (Pre-head + NH)', 'the noun head + the post-head dependent item (NH + Post-head)', 'pre-head item+ the noun head + the post-head item (Pre-head + NH + Post-head)'. In practice, the data gathered gave enough recognition to the attributive invectives in the form of 'Pre-head item + the noun head (Pre-head + NH)' as the core remnant noun phrase construction to be realised in the rhetorics of many Ghanaian politicians. This noun phrase (Pre-head item + the noun head (Pre-head + NH)) is further developed into various forms of sub-structural patterns to include 'Determiner + General adjective + Noun Head', 'Determiner + adjective + adjective + Noun Head', General adjective item + Noun Head', '–ing participle + Noun Head' and 'Determiner + Noun Head'. All of these structures are grammatically

interspersed to form one co-operative figure in order to build one central idea. Some classical examples of this kind of invectives are identified in (5)–(17) in its various forms.

a. **Determiner + General adjective + Noun Head**

5.	Asiedu Nketsiah is <u>a loose talker</u>.	(Daily Guide; November 2, 2012)
6.	Paul Collins Appiah-Ofori is <u>a bed wetter</u>.	(peacefmonline.com; February 21, 2012)
7.	Nana Akuffo-Addo is <u>an untidy man</u> . . .	(Daily Guide; March 22, 2011)
8.	Nana Addo is <u>an ugly mammoth</u>.	(peacefmonline.com; September 14, 2011)
9.	Nana Akuffo-Addo is <u>a 'wee' smoker</u>.	(Daily Guide; February 27, 2011)
10.	Nana Akuffo-Addo is <u>a serial smoker</u>.	(Daily Guide; May 19, 2011)

b. **Determiner + adjective + adjective + Noun head**

11.	Akuffo-Addo is <u>a sexy old fool</u>.	(Daily Guide; March 23, 2011)
12.	Elvis, <u>a notorious loose talker</u> . . .	(Daily Guide; November 2, 2012)

c. **General adjective + Noun Head**

13.	NDC is <u>filthy corrupt</u>.	(The Chronicle; October 2, 2011)
14.	(Watch) <u>evil dwarfs</u> in NDC . . .	(The New Statesman; April 3, 2012)

d. **–ing participle + Noun Head**

15.	<u>Thieving Mahama</u> caught.	(Daily Searchlight; October 2, 2012)

e. **Determiner + Noun Head**

16.	Wayo is <u>a liar</u>.	(Daily Searchlight, October 2, 2012)
17.	Nana Addo is . . . <u>a fruitcake</u>.	(Daily Guide; March 22, 2011)

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The use of these combinations as noun phrase constructions was meant to provide a certain form of concomitant relations to the behaviour of the persons for whom those invective expressions are being directed to. The whole pre-modifying elements and the noun heads form the base point for the construction of invective expressions in this context to remain stylistically resolute. As such, these invective expressions are used as a disparaging aspect of communication, so as to amplify the fervent desire to make these persons (*Asiedu Nketsiah*, *Paul Collins Appiah-Ofori*, *Akuffo-Addo*, *Elvis*, *Mahama*, *Wayo*) look so bad and politically unimportant since they are therefore not fit for purpose in the political terrain. According to Kodah (2012:3), attributive invectives provide a depreciative realism through a conscious combination of carefully chosen linguistic tools and syntactic constructions to evoke a perceptible imagery of a person in a derogatory form. This follows from the fact that the addressers' employment of the invective expressions is an obvious enactment of a polarised relationship between the 'Us' and the 'Them' group. In this process, the 'Us' group is found to be establishing a self-interested group opinion (van Dijk (1998) as cited in Ofori (2018:25)) that provides enough grounds to communicate a certain intention that allows the audience to focus their attention on the 'Them' group as a pack of politically hybrid non-entities who are useless, dirty and unreliable. This development also indicates that most of the attributive invectives are used to provide a direct personal attack and to further suggest a declaration of an open enmity between the members of 'Us' group and the 'Them' group (see Powell, (n.d.) as cited in Kodah (2012:3)). The development of these expressions is naturally unhealthy and culturally unacceptable in no uncertain terms as it brings the classical fountains of Ghanaian political activity into a serious derailment and disrepute. It certainly appears that the political climate in Ghana is so much diffused with unprintable words to such an extent that it does not give meaning to the sense of humanistic reasoning, the value of 'we-feeling' and reverence to themselves as actors in the political space. As such, our politicians seem to value invective expressions as the only logic resource for making their messages heard so as to give them recognition and popularity into the entire political landscape. The reason for this development is attributed to the fact that Ghanaian politics is characterised by low levels of trust and a high degree of partisan fragmentation. Indeed, the extent to which political antagonism is carried into individual's personal lives has become the order of the day (Frempong (2007) as cited in Bentil & Aidoo (2018:11)) and therefore makes the engagement of political activity too dangerous and also gradually becoming a zero-sum game for many well-meaning citizens to pursue in life (see Rozycka-Tran et al 2015).

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The symbolic invective also came to the fore. Under this type, only 6 (4.0%) was used by the politicians in their respective discourse. The symbolic invective has a dehumanising texture which is used to carry diminutive and disparaging slur on an individual. In a broader scheme of argument, symbolic invective is a form of abusive language that is marked by metaphoric replacement of people with ill-nature animal or non-animal attributes. Such a development is "much more pugnacious, provoking and revolting because of the loaded nature of their inferences as metaphors" (Kodah 2012:7). The sort of invectives realised in this situation only allows human personality to be reduced into a pugilistic inmate and also to become an object of socially shameful abyss. The symbolic invective is also an interesting aspect in this study because the sort of technique it employs abusively associates the human personality to an animal. Thus, human beings and their attitudes have been equated to animals so as to provide a form of metaphorical reference of a sort to an affected individual. Some key examples are as in (18)–(22).

18. Nana Addo looks like <u>a dog</u>.	(peacefmonline.com; September 14, 2011)
19. Nana Addo looks like <u>a frog</u>.	(peacefmonline.com; September 14, 2011)
20. President Mills looks like <u>a chimpanzee</u>.	(myjoyonline.com; September 14, 2011)
21. President Mills is <u>a sheep</u>. . .	(Daily Guide; May 19, 2011)
22. Nana Akuffo-Addo . . . smokes like <u>a rat</u>.	(Daily Guide; May 19, 2011)

Clearly, these animals (*cat, frog, chimpanzee* and *sheep*) belong to the class of phylum chordate (of the animal family), and they carry an unfair load of invectives in Ghanaian society. Their characteristics are often extended to describe the qualities and behaviours of human beings (Agyekum 2004:249). In this respect, people use the animals of this nature as an ideological reference point to denigrate other people and to make them look socially irrational. Describing and associating the relativity of 'Nana Addo' and 'President Mills's behaviour to these packs of hyenas ('dog', 'frog', 'rat', 'chimpanzee', and 'sheep') is meant to suggest that they are unattractive and have sobriquet attitude which make their personalities highly incompatible with human character. These animal-like descriptions paint a treading repugnance on the characters and the personalities of 'Nana Addo' and 'President Mills' respectively. According to Agyekum (2004:349), the use of animal names

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as invectives in political discourse is normally meant to provide "some salient unpleasant characteristics from the folk concepts about the appearance and behaviour of an animal attributed to the target human". This therefore stands to reason that the invective users associate the behaviour of the victims to that of animals and that those people are victimised to become so canal, even to the dictate of non-human idiosyncrasies and foibles. Over here, the reliability of these invective expressions contains the creation of 'Us' and 'Them' ideology. With this, the 'Us' group focuses their arguments on the employment of animal categories to debase the 'Them' group (Agyekum 2004:360). This development is certainly meant to dehumanise the 'Them' group; and to further belittle them as socially defective and have no political dignity. In all, this abuse of the political characters like 'Nana Addo' and 'President Mills' is an indication of an ideological and pejorative nature of 'Us' group which has its animal-metaphorical inferences being loaded to provide a scandalous rendition of causing psychological discordance and torture into the lives of the 'Them' group, that is, 'Nana Addo' and 'President Mills'. As a result, these unbecoming rhetorics are used to serve as political bile, cursive, tantrum and glibness of fanaticism to project a certain destructive agenda (Imoh 2014:2) in order to convey the imprint of a some political ideology and its value judgement on the lives of the affected persons (Richardson 2007:47). Essentially, the use of animal motifs in this relation has become so important to the core of the Ghana's political rhetoric, and has therefore been identified as a socio-cultural realty in Ghanaian political set up where politicians and political activists see the animal motifs as the best way to undermine and destroy themselves and other political opponents.

4. Conclusion

So far, the study has carefully focused on the use of invective expressions in Ghanaian political discourse and its pragma-stylistic effect on the lives of the affected persons. In carry out this study, the pattern of arguments established has revealed that the pragma-stylistic basis for the use of these invective expressions was to serve as an antagonistic act for the 'Us' group to vituperatively attack, disrespect, cause emotional pains and to further make the 'Them' group look politically 'dirty', flustered and socially irrelevant. This development has become so in Ghanaian context because the system of political communication has been engulfed with a high sense of various conflictual tendencies where the 'Us' group sees the 'Them' group as an enemy in an uncompromising face-

threatening manner, thereby affecting their respective interpersonal relationship as members of a homogeneous society.

In fact, the growing need for invective expressions in Ghanaian political discourse is so alarming that they are gradually yielding a very negative impact in the country's democratic development and affecting the next generation of politicians who are expected to grow to become decent politicians. This situation is becoming quite disturbing in the sense that the practice of invective expressions has been the key item that is abundantly used by most politicians in Ghana. This is because they only use these expressions to serve as a strong social weapon to destroy others and to put those people (others) into the class of 'politically nothingness'. As a result, individual parties and their members who have resorted to the use of these demoralising and soul-wrecking expressions that are considered fundamentally 'unGhanaian' must not be allowed to continue along this path since the excessive use of these invective expressions could unfortunately spike the spew of controversies in the future and further mar the country's successful journey towards a democratic process.

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FM Stations
- Adom FM
- Asempa FM

Appendix

1.	Nana Addo is uncircumcised.	*(citifmonline.com; May 10, 2011)*
2.	Atta Mills is impotent	*(Daily Guide; May 25, 2011)*
3.	Atta Mills is blind.	*(citifmonline.com; May 23, 2011)*
4.	Nana Akuffo-Addo is an untidy man . . .	*(Daily Guide; March 22, 2011)*
5.	Nana Addo is an ugly mammoth.	*(peacefmonline.com; September 14, 2011)*
6.	Nana Akuffo-Addo is a 'wee' smoker.	*(Daily Guide; February 27, 2011)*
7.	Nana Akuffo-Addo is a serial smoker.	*(Daily Guide; May 19, 2011)*
8.	Nana Addo looks like a dog.	*(peacefmonline.com; September 14, 2011)*
9.	Nana Addo looks like a frog.	*(peacefmonline.com; September 14, 2011)*
10.	President Mills looks like a chimpanzee.	*(myjoyonline.com; September 14, 2011)*
11.	President Mills is a sheep. . .	*(Daily Guide; May 19, 2011)*
12.	Nana Akuffo-Addo . . . smokes like a rat.	*(Daily Guide; May 19, 2011)*
13.	NDC is filthy corrupt.	(*The Chronicle; October 2, 2011*)
14.	Akuffo-Addo is a sexy old fool.	(*Daily Guide; March 23, 2011*)
15.	Nana Addo is . . . a fruitcake (mad man).	(*Daily Guide; March 22, 2011*)
16.	Mills is a 'kwaseampanyin'. . .	(*Daily Guide; March 25, 2011*)
17.	Michael Teye Nyaunu is a 'Dudui' element	(*citifmonline.com; July 9, 2011*)

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18.	Rawlings is behaving like an 'uneducated illiterate'	*(Adom FM; April 5, 2011)*
19.	Rawlings is the most agitative foot soldier . . .	*(Asempa FM; September 14, 2011)*
20.	Kobby Acheampong is a disgrace to governance	*(citifmonline.com; May 21, 2011)*
21.	Ursula Owusu is a 'disgrace to womanhood'	*(Daily Guide, March 21, 2011)*
22.	Nana Addo . . . is an ugly mammoth	*(peacefmonline.com; September 14, 2011)*
23.	Rawlings . . . is the 'Suarez' in the party.	*(peacefmonline.com; April 19, 2011)*
24.	President Mills is the lousiest president . . .	*(myjoyonline.com; September 14, 2011)*
25.	Loose-talking 'Genocide' MP on the loose again.	*(The Catalyst, September 7, 2011)*
26.	The rotten NPP judgement debt baggage.	*(Ghana Palaver; July 20, 2012)*
27.	Arrogant Kan-Dapaah running a 'one man' show.	*(Ghana Palaver; July 20, 2012)*
28.	Dishonest Bawumia has not been fair . . .	*(myjoyonline.com; December 28, 2012)*
29.	Mills is number one hypocrite.	*(Daily Guide; May 28, 2012)*
30.	Kuffour's 30 constituencies senseless.	*(Ghana Palaver, August 27–28, 2012)*
31.	True NPP old evil Dwarfs at work.	*(Ghana Palaver; July 20, 2012)*
32.	There are old evil dwarfs in NDC.	*(The Daily Searchlight; October 5, 2012)*
33.	Elvis, a notorious loose talker . . .	*(Daily Guide; November 2, 2012)*
34.	(Watch) evil dwarfs in NDC . . .	*(The New Statesman; April 3, 2012)*
35.	Thieving Mahama caught.	*(Daily Searchlight; October 2, 2012)*
36.	Wayo is a liar.	*(Daily Searchlight; October 2, 2012)*

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37.	Greedy bastards and babies with sharp teeth.	*(The New Statesman; April 3, 2012)*
38.	Wayome is a crass criminal.	*(Daily Guide, June 5, 2012)*
39.	(General Secretary of NPP describing Mr. Yamoah Ponkoh (MCE) as) Blatant liar.	*(Daily Guide; November 12, 2012)*
	The NPP is becoming a 'comic relief' to Ghanaians.	*(myradiogoldlive.com; December 19, 2012)*
40.	(Dr. Opuni) You're an idiot.	*(Daily Guide, August 29, 2012)*
41.	NPP flagbearer is visionless . . .	*(myradiogoldlive.com; November 21, 2012)*
42.	Asiedu Nketsiah is a loose talker.	*(Daily Guide; November 2, 2012)*
43.	(To Asiedu Nketsiah) Mosquito is drunk.	*(Daily Guide; September 10, 2012)*
44.	A greedy, sycophantic bastard.	*(Daily Searchlight; October 2, 2012)*
45.	Lying minster exposed!	*(Daily Searchlight; October 2, 2012)*
46.	Paul Collins Appiah-Ofori is a bed wetter.	*(peacefmonline.com; February 21, 2012)*
47.	Acid tongues like Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa.	*(Daily Guide; August 28, 2012)*
48.	(Minister to a journalist) You are also sick.	*(The Chronicle; July 19, 2012)*
49.	Mills is Ghana's number 1 Thief . . . He is jail-bound.	*(The Daily Searchlight; October 5, 2012)*
50.	'Barking dog' Rawlings won't campaign for you.	*(The New Statesman; April 3, 2012)*
51.	Ablokwa is <u>stupid</u>.	*(The New Statesman; April 3, 2012)*
52.	(To Mahama) 'Tɛ Ni' can't govern us.	*(The Al-Hajj; August 16, 2012)*
53.	(To Pastor Otabil) You are evil.	*(The New Statesman; April 3, 2012)*
54.	Jake is ignorant about Mahama.	*(The New Voice; August 22, 2012)*
55.	Akuffo-Addo is wicked and not worth dying for.	*(Ghana Palaver; June 20, 2012)*

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56.	Mpiani is suffering from amnesia.	*(The National Democrat, December 6, 2012)*
57.	Bawumia spills ignorance everywhere.	*(Ghana Palaver; June 20–21, 2012)*
58.	(Mr. Sorogho describing studio members) You're bush guys, stupid.	*(Daily Guide; September 13, 2012)*
59.	Nana Addo lacks character to lead a nation.	*(The Al-Hajj; February 23, 2012)*
60.	The NPP's hypocrisy knows no bounds.	*(Ghana Palaver; August 27–28, 2012)*
61.	NPP people are very stupid . . .	*(peacefmonline.com; April 13, 2013)*
62.	NPP people . . . are getting crazy and mad.	*(peacefmonline.com; April 13, 2013)*
63.	Rascal Akuffo-Addo . . .	*(The Informer, May 29–30, 2013)*
64.	NPP national executives are thieves.	*(Daily Post, December 3, 2013)*
65.	NPP is full of thieves.	*(The Informer, December 18, 2013)*
66.	Wereko-Brobbey is a non-entity.	*(myradiogoldlive.com; May 31, 2013)*
67.	Any NPP member against Nana Addo as a flagbearer is stupid.	*(peacefmonline.com; December 11, 2013)*
68.	Afari Gyan is stupid and not indispensable.	*(peacefmonline.com; April 4, 2013)*
69.	Nana Addo has an Offensive Body Language.	*(peacefmonline.com; December 19, 2013)*
70.	Nana Nketsia is an indecent Vandal.	*(ghanawebonline.com; November 2, 2013)*
71.	NPP turned Ghana into cocaine country.	*(radiogoldonlive.com; June 7, 2013)*
72.	Your pay masters are crooks.	*(Daily Post, December 17, 2013)*
73.	David Annan is evil!	*(ghanaweb.com; November 2, 2013)*

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74.	Mr. K. T. Hammond slammed Majority leader for passing) Foolish, stupid and useless comments.	*(peacefmonline.com; April 4, 2013)*
75.	Addison's address is infantile, lacks intellectual depth.	*(myradiogoldlive.com; August 10, 2013)*
76.	K. T. Hammond is suffering from multiple personality disorder.	*(myradiogoldlive.com; November 30, 2013)*
77.	John Mahama is the worst Ghanaian President . . . his ideas are totally bankrupt and uninspiring.	*(Daily Guide; December 19, 2013)*
78.	President Mahama is an insensitive father of the nation.	*(peacefmonline.com; December 25, 2013)*
79.	Osafo Marfo is a disgrace to economics.	*(The Al-Hajj; July 17, 2013)*
80.	Corruption did not start with Mahama . . . Kuffour was an 'Autocratic Thief'.	*(peacefmonline.com; January 19, 2014)*
81.	President Mahama is a woman if he does not sack FDA Management.	*(peacefmonline.com; October 21, 2014)*