



A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Acceptance Speeches of Winners of APC and PDP 2022 Presidential Primary Election

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Abstract

This study analyses the linguistic and discursive devices utilised in the acceptance speeches of Bola Ahmed Tinubu from the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Atiku Abubakar from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) during Nigeria's 2022 presidential primary elections. It employs qualitative research methods, including close reading, coding, and thematic analysis. The research identifies 21 discursive devices in Tinubu's speech and 19 in Abubakar's. The study reveals that actor description was the most frequently used in both speeches, while the PDP's rhetoric emphasised vagueness and polarisation. Conversely, the APC speeches showcased various rhetorical strategies, suggesting a more diverse communicative approach. Tinubu's acceptance speech emphasises themes of continuity, unity, and a progressive vision aligned with the Buhari's administration. His rhetoric is marked by expressions of gratitude towards party delegates, fostering a sense of collective endorsement and reinforcing his legitimacy as the party's candidate. By acknowledging the leadership of President Buhari and highlighting youth empowerment, Tinubu positions himself as a forward-thinking leader capable of guiding Nigeria towards progress. In contrast, Abubakar's speech focuses on the necessity for change, restoration of past prosperity, and strong appeals to party loyalty. He critiques the incumbent government's performance, presenting himself as a unifying figure who can heal divisions and restore national cohesion. This analysis employs Teun A. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model and the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to understand the role of language in shaping political ideologies and public opinion. The findings underscore both candidates' distinct rhetorical strategies and ideological frameworks, revealing their contrasting visions for Nigeria's future governance. By examining the acceptance speeches, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how political leaders use language to assert legitimacy and galvanise support within their parties, ultimately shaping the narrative of the 2022 Nigerian presidential primary election.

Keywords: Discourse Strategies, Acceptance Speeches, Presidential Election

Introduction

The power of language in shaping political discourse and influencing public opinion is widely recognised, particularly in the context of political speeches. Woolley and Howard (2018) emphasise that speeches are essential for politicians to communicate messages, rally support, and shape public perception. Beyond mere communication, political speeches actively construct realities, legitimise

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power, and promote ideological positions. Analysing these speeches through a critical discourse perspective can uncover the discursive strategies employed by political actors and the power dynamics within political structures. Political discourse, therefore, extends beyond individual statements to encompass broader societal, cultural, and historical influences that shape governance, policy decisions, and public affairs (Kirvalidze & Samnidze, 2016).

A key feature of political discourse is its persuasive nature, as politicians employ various linguistic and rhetorical strategies to influence audiences. Charteris-Black (2018) highlights the role of emotive language, logical reasoning, storytelling, and the construction of charismatic personas in political persuasion. Furthermore, political discourse is characterised by power relations, with language as a tool for asserting authority, legitimising positions, and shaping public perception. Politicians use framing, agenda-setting, and symbolic representation to influence how political issues are understood. Ideology also plays a significant role, as political actors articulate their beliefs through language, reinforcing group identities and allegiances. These elements are particularly relevant in the context of Nigerian politics, where the acceptance speeches of the winners of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) 2022 presidential primary elections provide valuable insights into how language is used to consolidate political power and rally support.

Acceptance speeches mark a crucial transition in the electoral process as candidates shift from being contenders to standard-bearers of their parties. As Nigeria's two dominant political parties, the APC and PDP command significant influence and shape national political discourse. Their primary elections are highly anticipated, and acceptance speeches serve as strategic moments for candidates to align their messages with party ideologies, appeal to supporters, and attract undecided voters. Political language, often laden with propaganda and ideological positioning, reflects deeper social structures that can be examined through critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA provides a framework to uncover hidden meanings, challenge dominant narratives, and explore the interplay between language, power, and ideology within political communication. By applying CDA, researchers can critically assess the rhetorical devices, persuasive strategies, and ideological constructs embedded in these speeches, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of Nigerian political discourse.

Despite extensive research on political discourse, there remains a gap in the critical analysis of acceptance speeches in Nigerian politics. Previous studies have explored persuasive techniques, framing strategies, and the construction of political identities. Still, little attention has been given to Nigerian politicians using acceptance speeches to establish legitimacy and promote ideologies. This research aims to fill this gap by conducting a critical discourse analysis of the acceptance speeches delivered by the APC and PDP 2022 presidential primary election winners. The study will use systemic functional linguistics to identify linguistic features and discursive structures, examine rhetorical and ideological strategies, and compare the two candidates' speeches. By doing so, it seeks to enhance understanding of how language functions as a tool of political influence in Nigeria.

Language is a social construct influenced by societal factors and plays a key role in shaping public opinion across political, social, educational, and economic spheres. It is a system of communication using verbal and non-verbal symbols to express meaning. Mendivil-Giro (2021) argues that children possess an innate language acquisition device, enabling them to grasp grammatical rules effortlessly.



However, socio-cultural linguists like Moeller and Catalano (2015) emphasise the role of social interaction and cultural context in language development.

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory highlights how language is acquired through social interactions and cultural environments (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). While Chomsky's Universal Grammar Theory explains the universality of language structures, Vygotsky's approach highlights social and cultural influences, showing that both perspectives contribute to understanding language acquisition.

Language also has constraints. Jungk (2022) states that language is arbitrary, meaning there is no inherent connection between words and their meanings. This arbitrariness can complicate cross-cultural communication Schapper (2025). Additionally, Arslan et al. (2024) highlight language's limitations in conveying abstract ideas and emotions, as Wittgenstein suggests that specific human experiences cannot be fully expressed in words. Language structures thought but also restricts how reality is perceived (Gavelek & Bresnahan, 2014).

Language is also linked to power structures. Lippi-Green (2012) proposes the concept of linguistic capital, suggesting that language proficiency can serve as a form of social capital, providing advantages in education and employment. Bourdieu argues that standardised language forms benefit certain groups while marginalising others. Language can reinforce social hierarchies, as some dialects carry more prestige than others (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). Furthermore, language is central to cultural identity and preservation (Schechter, 2014). It carries cultural values and traditions, serving as a marker of identity (Wodak, 2020). Retaining one's native language can be a form of resistance against cultural assimilation (Johnston, 2011). Reserving endangered languages is essential for maintaining cultural diversity (Fernández-Llamazares et al., 2015). Language enables intercultural dialogue, fostering mutual understanding.

Language is a powerful tool that shapes perceptions and social structures. Foucault emphasises that discourse regulates thoughts and behaviours, reinforcing power structures. However, power also operates through economic and political systems. Kiramba (2018) highlights how institutions like governments, media, and education shape language to maintain dominant ideologies. Political discourse exemplifies how language influences public perception, though its impact depends on factors such as critical thinking and access to alternative viewpoints. Fairclough also argues that language can be a site of resistance, as marginalised voices challenge dominant narratives (Idrissi et al., 2021).

Language manipulation is central to power dynamics. Media plays a role in shaping public opinion through linguistic framing (Fleming & Spicer, 2014). Feeney & Porumbescu (2021) emphasise how media biases can reinforce existing power structures. Wolfsfeld (2022) argues that media outlets often serve political interests, silencing dissenting voices. However, alternative media sources provide counter-narratives, and media literacy helps mitigate manipulation. Beyond media, language is used in political speeches, advertising, and public relations to shape narratives. Holborow (2015) notes that specialised terminology can exclude those unfamiliar with it, reinforcing social inequalities. Discriminatory language, such as sexist or racist expressions, perpetuates power imbalances (Barrett et al., 2022). Implicit biases and microaggressions further sustain existing hierarchies.

Despite its use in reinforcing power, language can also serve as a tool for resistance. Efforts to promote inclusive language challenge stereotypes and empower marginalised groups (Khan & Sajid,



2024). Phyak (2021) argues that language can subvert dominant ideologies, enabling marginalised communities to reclaim narratives and push for social change. Taylor (2022) highlights the transformative power of naming in resisting power hierarchies. However, dominant structures often suppress alternative voices (Schneier, 2023). Nevertheless, language remains a site of contestation, reflecting the ongoing struggle between oppression and resistance.

Persuasion, derived from the Latin “persuade,” refers to discourse aimed at influencing behaviour, emotions, or thoughts (Wagemans, 2023). Most speech is inherently persuasive, requiring specific language techniques, such as emotional appeals, to capture attention and gain trust. Persuasion influences attitudes, principles, and opinions (Chaiken, 2014). Leaders often use persuasive language to reinforce their authority. Political figures employ rhetorical strategies to convince audiences of their policies (Rhoads & Valadez, 2016). In democratic societies, persuasion plays a key role in shaping public opinion and mobilising support.

Persuasive speeches are crucial in politics, where rhetoric enhances credibility and policy acceptance. Government officials and activists frequently use emotionally charged language to strengthen their arguments (Feinberg & Willer, 2019). Politicians leverage persuasion to identify public concerns and craft convincing arguments. Rhetoric, as the art of persuasion, differs slightly in its focus on communication techniques. While persuasion targets specific actions, rhetoric considers the listener’s perspective.

Language is an essential tool in politics, used by those seeking, exercising, or maintaining power (Ringe, 2022). Political language helps shape public perception and mobilise support. Poulantzas (2017) defines politics as a struggle for power to implement ideological, economic, and social agendas, with language playing a crucial role. Politicians use language to persuade audiences and validate their claims (Chimbarange et al., 2014). Political speech encompasses various forms, including debates, rallies, and inaugural addresses. Inaugural speeches, for example, are used not for votes but to instil confidence in a new administration.

Political campaigns are central to power struggles. Aduradola and Ojukwu (2013) state that the primary aim of campaigns is election victory. Campaign strategies, including advertisements, debates, and interviews, present candidates favourably while discrediting opponents (Opeibi, 2009). Political discourse reflects power dynamics, shaping governance and voter perceptions.

Discourse is a broad concept with multiple definitions across linguistics, sociology, and philosophy (Bayram, 2010). Fairclough (1989) describes discourse as the whole process of interaction, not just text, while Van Dijk (1993) argues that discourse reflects ideological structures within society. Discourse refers to spoken or written communication, often carrying social and ideological meanings. Darginaviciene (2023) describes discourse as language in use, with coherence examined through discourse analysis. Mirzaee and Hamidi (2012) define discourse analysis as studying how language is shaped by its context. In education, discourse analysis helps understand classroom interactions and teacher-student communication.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a methodological approach that examines the relationship between language, ideology, and power in political and social contexts (Fairclough, 2013). It provides empirical methods for analysing how discourse reflects and reinforces dominance, inequality, and social power (Van Dijk, 1993). By focusing on spoken and written texts, CDA seeks to uncover hidden ideological meanings and how language influences thought and maintains control. Fairclough (2017) outlines a three-dimensional framework that includes description, interpretation,



and explanation to explore how society shapes and shapes discourse, drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). CDA scholars argue that discourse reflects and constructs societal beliefs and values, influencing power dynamics (Fowler, 2013; Tian, 2021).

Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) examines how language is used in political contexts, including speeches, debates, policy documents, and media communication. Political discourse is interdisciplinary, drawing from politics, sociology, psychology, and linguistics, as it plays a crucial role in shaping national and global affairs (Tian, 2021). Political speeches occur in diverse settings such as rallies, media broadcasts, and formal debates, serving different purposes, including pre-and post-election messaging and responses to socio-political issues. These speeches are carefully crafted to persuade, manipulate, and mobilise audiences (Garimella et al., 2018). Effective political communication relies on accessible language and rhetorical strategies to influence public opinion.

Theoretical Framework

Teun A. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model provides a critical framework for analysing political discourse by integrating discourse, social, and cognitive perspectives. This model is beneficial for understanding how language functions within cultural and situational contexts. Van Dijk (1993) first applied his approach to media discourse, focusing on the portrayal of minorities and extending his framework to political texts and speeches. His model emphasises the importance of analysing discourse beyond its textual structure by examining its production, comprehension, and reception. Elements such as lexicon, syntax, and rhetorical structures are explored through micro-level analysis, while macro-level analysis focuses on power relations, dominance, and social inequality (Van Dijk, 1993). One of his key contributions is the "Ideological Square", which explains how political actors emphasise their positive attributes while downplaying their negative aspects and simultaneously highlight the negative aspects of their opponents while minimising their positive contributions. This strategy helps shape political narratives, reinforce group identities, and influence public perception in political discourse. In applying Van Dijk's model to this study, the analysis of political speeches focuses on how politicians use language strategically to construct ideological representations. The semantic macro-strategies of "Positive Self-Representation" and "Negative Other-Representation" (are examined in political rhetoric, where leaders present themselves and their parties positively while portraying opponents negatively. Additionally, Van Dijk's 25 discursive devices (e.g., hyperbole, presupposition, euphemism, and polarisation) decode hidden ideological meanings in political speeches (Van Dijk, 1993).

Methodology

This study employs a critical qualitative content analysis approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the acceptance speeches of the APC and PDP 2022 presidential primary winners in Nigeria. A single-case design was utilised to analyse linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and ideological positioning in-depth. The purposive sampling technique ensured representation from both major political parties, with the sample size determined by the saturation principle for comprehensive data gathering. Data collection involved transcribing speeches sourced from credible media archives, supplemented by audio and video analysis to capture delivery nuances. The analysis framework is based on Teun A. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), examining the speeches at both micro and macro levels. Linguistic structures, discursive strategies, and ideological themes were coded and categorised to identify patterns. At the same time, the political context and party ideologies were considered to assess their impact on public perception and political legitimacy. By integrating qualitative analysis, this methodological



approach ensures a holistic understanding of how language shapes narratives in Nigerian political discourse.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Assertion of Legitimacy and Ideology in the Acceptance Speeches

1. Bola Ahmed Tinubu's (of the APC) Acceptance Speech

In delivering his acceptance speech for the APC presidential primary election, Bola Ahmed Tinubu strategically employed a nuanced blend of language and rhetoric. Through this artful linguistic orchestration, Tinubu not only solidified his legitimacy as the chosen standard-bearer of the party but adeptly disseminated his political ideologies, resonating with both the party faithful and the broader electorate. By deftly weaving together words of gratitude, acknowledgements of predecessors, and visionary aspirations for the nation's future, Tinubu's speech transcended mere rhetoric, serving as a testament to his leadership acumen and commitment to steering Nigeria towards a path of progress and prosperity (Tinubu, 2022).

a. Gratitude and Humility

Tinubu begins by expressing gratitude towards the delegates and other stakeholders, acknowledging their role in making him the party's standard-bearer. Tinubu said, "*I must thank you all for making me the standard bearer of our progressive party*" (Tinubu, 2022, para. 3)

Tinubu's heartfelt expression of gratitude towards the delegates and stakeholders reverberated through the historic Eagle Square as he stood humbly before the crowd. With sincerity in his voice, he acknowledged their pivotal role in anointing him as the flag-bearer of the progressive party. This genuine display of humility not only underscored his profound appreciation for their support but also underscored his recognition of the collective power vested in the party members. In acknowledging their instrumental role, Tinubu artfully elevated the significance of their contributions, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie within the party ranks. Such humility and gratitude served to fortify his legitimacy as a leader chosen by the people, firmly anchoring his candidacy in the unwavering support of the party faithful (Tinubu, 2022).

In another instance, "Thank you, the delegates, for the confidence you have shown in me" (Tinubu, 2022, para. 4).

As Tinubu extended his gratitude towards the delegates, his words resonated with humility and appreciation, echoing across the hallowed grounds of Eagle Square. With a deep sense of humility, he acknowledged the trust and confidence bestowed upon him by the delegates, recognising the weight of their collective endorsement. This sincere expression of gratitude reflected Tinubu's humility and underscored his profound understanding of the immense responsibility entrusted to him by the party members. By humbly accepting their mandate, Tinubu reaffirmed his commitment to serving as a faithful steward of their aspirations, thereby strengthening his legitimacy as a leader chosen by the people.

In essence, this demonstrates humility and a sense of indebtedness to the party members, enhancing his legitimacy as a leader chosen by the people. This acknowledgement of their confidence served as a poignant testament to the unity and solidarity that underscored his candidacy, cementing his position as the rightful standard-bearer of the party (Tinubu, 2022).



b. Acknowledgement of Predecessors

Tinubu acknowledges President Buhari's leadership and role in ensuring a fair primary process. By recognising the current president's efforts, Tinubu aligns himself with the existing leadership and presents himself as a continuation of the party's current trajectory, reinforcing his legitimacy within the party.

I must thank you all for making me the standard bearer of our progressive party. And I humbly accept the nomination of this convention to be the presidential candidate of our enlightened, humanitarian and great party, the All Progressives Congress. I also offer my sincere gratitude to President Buhari for his calm and prudent leadership throughout this process (Tinubu, 2022, para. 2).

In a poignant moment of recognition, Tinubu graciously acknowledged President Buhari's steady hand in guiding the party through the labyrinth of the primary election process. With a tone of respect and admiration, Tinubu extended his sincere gratitude towards President Buhari for his unwavering commitment to upholding the principles of fairness and transparency throughout the electoral proceedings. By publicly lauding President Buhari's leadership, Tinubu paid homage to the incumbent president and positioned himself as a stalwart advocate for continuity and stability within the party. This strategic gesture aligned Tinubu with the existing leadership structure and underscored his dedication to preserving the party's core values and principles. In doing so, Tinubu artfully reinforced his legitimacy within the party hierarchy, presenting himself as a natural successor poised to uphold the torch of progress and prosperity ignited by his esteemed predecessor (Tinubu 2022).

c. Unity and Inclusivity

Tinubu emphasises unity within the party by thanking his fellow aspirants and recognising their contributions. This gesture aims to unite the party behind his candidacy. It portrays him as a leader capable of fostering consensus and collaboration, bolstering his legitimacy as a unifying figure within the party.

I commend my fellow aspirants. It is a difficult thing to run for president. The stiff and bold competition you offered made our party stronger and made me better. I must say a special word of thanks to the seven aspirants [Alhaji Badaru Abubakar; Sen. Ibikunle Amosun; Sen. Ajayi Borroface; Rt. Hon. Dimeji Bankole; Sen. Godswill Akpabio; Dr. Kayode Fayemi; and Barr. (Mrs.) Uju Kennedy] who chose to step down their personal ambitions for the good of the party and the unity of our purpose (Tinubu, 2022, para. 5).

With a magnanimous spirit of inclusivity, Tinubu extended a heartfelt commendation to his fellow aspirants, recognising their arduous journey in pursuing the presidential candidacy. In a poignant acknowledgement of their sacrifices and contributions, Tinubu expressed gratitude for the stiff competition they offered, acknowledging its transformative impact on himself and the party. Moreover, Tinubu singled out the seven aspirants who selflessly set aside their personal ambitions in deference to the greater good of the party and the collective unity of purpose. This gracious gesture of recognition not only underscored Tinubu's commitment to fostering a culture of inclusivity and collaboration but also positioned him as a unifying figure capable of transcending individual aspirations for the betterment of the party. By acknowledging the diverse voices and perspectives within the party fold, Tinubu sought to forge a cohesive coalition of support behind his



candidacy, thereby enhancing his legitimacy as a unifying force poised to lead the party towards its shared objectives and aspirations (Tinubu, 2022).

d. Empowerment and Hope

Tinubu emphasises empowering the youth and addressing key societal issues such as poverty and insecurity. By articulating concrete plans and initiatives to address these challenges, he presents himself as a leader committed to the welfare of the Nigerian people. He offers hope for a better future under his leadership. This rhetoric aims to resonate with voters and garner support for his candidacy, further solidifying his legitimacy as a credible leader.

Our teeming youth population is our nation's greatest asset. We will create jobs for our youth from the Zamfara and Osun gold deposits to the vast agricultural lands across the country. We will create new opportunities in the FINTECH sector, the creative and entertainment industries, digital skills and other areas (Tinubu, 2022, para. 12).

In a stirring proclamation of empowerment and hope, Tinubu illuminated a path towards a brighter future for Nigeria's youth, acknowledging them as the nation's most valuable resource. With unwavering resolve, he pledged to harness the boundless potential of the youth demographic by creating robust job opportunities spanning diverse sectors, from the untapped gold reserves of Zamfara and Osun to the fertile agricultural lands that dot the Nigerian landscape. Moreover, Tinubu envisioned a future where innovation thrives, promising to cultivate new horizons of opportunity in burgeoning industries such as FINTECH, creative arts, and digital technologies. Through his impassioned rhetoric, Tinubu sought to instill a sense of hope and optimism in the hearts of Nigerians, assuring them of a future filled with promise and prosperity under his leadership. By articulating concrete plans and initiatives to address key societal issues such as poverty and insecurity, Tinubu positioned himself as a beacon of hope and a catalyst for positive change, galvanising support for his candidacy and further solidifying his legitimacy as a credible leader committed to the welfare of the Nigerian people.

2. Atiku Abubakar of PDP Acceptance Speech

In his acceptance speech following his victory in the PDP presidential primary election, Atiku Abubakar strategically employs language and rhetoric to solidify his legitimacy as a leader and advocate for his political ideologies. Through careful choice of words and persuasive techniques, Abubakar seeks to rally support and project authority and set the stage for his vision for Nigeria's future.

a. Appeal to Unity

In his acceptance speech, Atiku Abubakar places a significant emphasis on the imperative need for unity in Nigeria. He states,

"Today, we are making another history (applause), a history which we believe will bring about fundamental changes in government and also in our political processes" (Atiku, 2022, para. 2)

Here, Atiku sets the tone for his appeal to unity by framing his victory as a pivotal moment in Nigeria's history, one that promises transformative change. By linking his victory to the prospect of broader societal transformation, he suggests that unity is not just desirable but essential for progress. Furthermore, Atiku directly addresses the divisive impact of the current administration, remarking,



"The government of the APC has disunited Nigerians completely. Between the north and south, east and west, Muslims and Christians..." (Atiku, 2022, para. 4).

With this statement, he confronts the reality of existing divisions and positions himself as a counterforce to this disunity. By acknowledging the fractures within Nigerian society, he presents himself as a leader who is acutely aware of the challenges facing the nation and is committed to healing these divisions.

He concludes his appeal to unity by pledging,

"I pledge that I will work to ensure I restore unity and I give a sense of belonging to all Nigerians, irrespective of the faith they practiced" (Atiku, 2022, para. 3)

Here, he articulates a clear commitment to fostering inclusivity and belonging among all Nigerians, regardless of their religious or regional affiliations. By making this pledge, he positions himself as a unifying figure dedicated to bridging divides and creating a more cohesive society. In short, Atiku's emphasis on unity portrays him as a leader who is capable of transcending differences and uniting Nigerians towards a common purpose (Abubakar, 2022).

b. Promotion of Prosperity

In his acceptance speech, Atiku Abubakar adeptly promotes the prospect of prosperity for Nigeria by drawing attention to the economic successes achieved under the governance of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). He asserts,

"The PDP made Nigeria one of the most prosperous or if not the prosperous country on the African continent" (Atiku, 2022, para. 4).

This statement not only acknowledges past achievements but also positions the PDP as a party with a proven track record of delivering economic prosperity to the nation (Abubakar, 2022).

c. Appeal to Party Loyalty

Atiku strategically appeals to the loyalty of party members, aiming to solidify his position as the chosen candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). He begins by acknowledging the various stakeholders within the party, stating,

"Members of the national working of our great party, members of the board of trustees, let me make a special mention of the electoral panel that conducted this election, our dear delegates, our most respected governors, distinguished ladies and gentlemen" (Atiku, 2022, para. 1).

Through this inclusive language, Abubakar seeks to foster a sense of unity and camaraderie among party members, reinforcing their shared identity as part of the PDP.

Atiku further emphasises the importance of party loyalty by urging those who may have left the party to return. He asserts,

"Let me also use this opportunity to call on my fellow contestants and to assure them that I am ready to cooperate and work with them and give them a sense of belonging in this party and our next government" (Atiku, 2022, para. 5).

Here, he extends an olive branch to former rivals, signaling his willingness to collaborate and reconcile within the party ranks. By demonstrating his commitment to inclusivity and unity,



Abubakar reinforces his legitimacy as the party's chosen candidate and seeks to rally support from all corners of the party (Abubakar, 2022).

d. Appeal to the Masses

In his acceptance speech, Atiku Abubakar also strategically appeals to the masses by demonstrating empathy for the challenges faced by ordinary Nigerians. He begins by acknowledging the hardships experienced by the people, stating,

"Distinguish ladies and gentlemen, please in the name of God, let us remember the poor people of this country, the ordinary people of this country" (Atiku, 2022, para. 7)

Through this invocation, Abubakar highlights his concern for the welfare of the most vulnerable members of society, positioning himself as a leader who is attuned to their struggles and committed to addressing their needs. Also, by addressing the audience with respect and humility, he establishes a connection with the masses, portraying himself as a leader who is accessible and responsive to their concerns. Furthermore, Abubakar pledges to work towards resolving the challenges faced by ordinary Nigerians, declaring,

"Let us work to resolve most of their challenges if not all of their challenges" (Atiku, 2022, para. 7).

Here, he articulates a clear commitment to improving the lives of the masses, underscoring his role as a champion of their interests. By acknowledging the limitations of his ability to address all challenges, he demonstrates humility and pragmatism while simultaneously emphasising his dedication to making tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary Nigerians. This acknowledgement of the complexities of governance instils confidence in his ability to lead effectively and responsibly. Moreover, his emphasis on the plight of the masses is underscored by his invocation of God, which adds a layer of moral authority to his message. By appealing to divine guidance and invoking religious sentiments, he seeks to resonate with the Nigerian populace's deeply held beliefs and values, further reinforcing his image as a leader guided by compassion and integrity. Through this religious appeal, Abubakar connects with a significant portion of the population who may find solace and reassurance in his faith-driven approach to leadership, thus solidifying his support base among religious communities. (Abubakar, 2022).

Comparative Study of Communication Discursive Frame

Communication is the core of leadership, serving as the fundamental channel through which leaders articulate their visions, rally support, and inspire action. Leaders, whether steering a nation's trajectory or navigating intricate challenges in fictional realms, harness diverse discursive devices and rhetorical strategies to convey their messages, sculpt narratives, and wield influence over their audiences. In the domain of politics, where the stakes are elevated and competition is intense, acceptance speeches following primary elections emerge as pivotal junctures for candidates to affirm their legitimacy and galvanize their party faithful. These speeches serve as platforms for candidates to articulate their visions, showcase their leadership qualities, and resonate with the sentiments and aspirations of their constituents. Against the backdrop of Nigeria's 2022 presidential primary elections, both the victors of the APC and PDP harnessed an array of discursive strategies in their acceptance speeches, emblematic of their respective party ideologies while aiming to cement their legitimacy as candidates. These speeches offer windows into the individual candidates' leadership personas and the broader ideological underpinnings and priorities of their political



affiliations. A comparative examination of their discursive strategies can unravel nuanced distinctions and resemblances in their communication approaches, thus illuminating deeper insights into their political agendas and aspirations for the nation.

Differences

While the APC and PDP used various discursive devices in their acceptance speeches, notable differences in their approaches are evident. One significant distinction lies in the breadth of discursive devices each party employs. The APC speeches demonstrated a wider variety of rhetorical tools than the PDP speeches. This suggests a more diverse communication strategy by the APC, catering to diverse audience perspectives and allowing for a nuanced expression of ideas. In contrast, the PDP speeches appeared to employ a more focused or targeted communication strategy, using a narrower range of discursive devices.

Similarities

Both the APC and PDP used various discursive devices in their acceptance speeches, including actor description, categorisation, generalisation, hyperbole, populism, and victimisation. These rhetorical tools were strategically employed to convey messages, shape narratives, and influence their respective audiences. Actor description was used by both parties to highlight the qualities and characteristics of individuals within their political spheres. At the same time, categorisation helped frame issues or groups in a particular way. Generalisation allowed for broad statements or assertions, often emphasising specific points or themes, while hyperbole was used for exaggeration and emphasis. Populism was evident in both speeches, appealing to the interests and concerns of the general public, while victimisation portrayed the parties or their supporters as oppressed or unfairly treated.

Discussing of Findings

The examination of the acceptance speeches from Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Atiku Abubakar, victors of the 2022 presidential primary elections for the APC and PDP, respectively, uncovers compelling insights into their rhetorical tactics and thematic priorities. This analysis sheds light on the linguistic and discursive manoeuvres these political figures employ to shape their narratives. Also, using quantitative data, a robust contextual framework is provided, highlighting significant parallels and divergences in the strategies adopted by Tinubu and Abubakar. This offers a deeper understanding of their leadership styles and their implications for Nigeria's political landscape.

Analysing the acceptance speeches of the winners of the APC and PDP 2022 presidential primary elections reveals several key findings regarding the research objectives:

Identification and Analysis of Discursive Devices

The findings indicate that Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Atiku Abubakar utilised diverse linguistic features and discursive structures in their acceptance speeches. These features included:

1. *Actor Description*: Both candidates described themselves and others within their political spheres to highlight qualities and characteristics relevant to their messages.
2. *Categorisation*: They framed issues or groups in particular ways to influence perceptions and shape narratives according to their political agendas.



3. *Generalisation*: Both employed broad statements or assertions to emphasise specific points or themes relevant to their visions for Nigeria's future.
4. *Hyperbole*: Exaggeration was used by both candidates to emphasise the significance of their proposed changes or policies.
5. *Populism*: Both speeches appealed to the interests and concerns of the general public, aiming to resonate with ordinary Nigerians.
6. *Victimisation*: They portrayed themselves or their supporters as oppressed or unfairly treated to evoke sympathy and support.
7. *Expressions of Gratitude and Humility*: Both candidates expressed gratitude towards party delegates and humility in acknowledging the collaborative nature of politics.
8. *Appeals to Unity and Collective Action*: Both emphasised the importance of unity and collaboration in addressing Nigeria's challenges, fostering solidarity and cohesion.

Tinubu's speech primarily focused on continuity, collaboration, and building upon existing foundations, aligning closely with the incumbent President Buhari's leadership. This approach aimed to reassure party members and stakeholders of his commitment to the party's ideals and governance agenda. In contrast, Atiku's speech centred on the need for change, highlighting the past prosperity under PDP governance and directly appealing to party loyalty and unity. This thematic emphasis positioned him as an agent of transformation, capitalising on public dissatisfaction with the current administration's performance.

These findings illustrate how both candidates strategically employed linguistic features and discursive structures to convey their messages, establish their legitimacy, and promote their political ideologies within their respective parties and among the Nigerian electorate.

Utilisation of Language and Rhetoric to Establish Legitimacy and Promote Political Ideologies

In their acceptance speeches, both Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Atiku Abubakar strategically used language and rhetoric to establish their legitimacy as candidates and promote their respective political ideologies. Here's how they achieved this:

1. *Tinubu's Emphasis on Continuity and Stability*: Tinubu positioned himself as a candidate dedicated to continuity and stability within the APC. He expressed profound gratitude towards President Buhari for his leadership, aligning himself closely with the incumbent president's principles and accomplishments. Tinubu reassured party members and stakeholders of his commitment to upholding the party's ideals and governance agenda by emphasising continuity. This strategic alignment with the current administration aimed to leverage existing support bases and appeal to continuity-minded voters within the party.
2. *Atiku's Advocacy for Change and Revival*: In contrast, Atiku presented himself as a candidate for change and revival under PDP governance. He underscored the achievements of the PDP in fostering prosperity in the past and juxtaposed them with what he perceived as the failures of the current APC government. Atiku positioned himself as a catalyst for economic revival and social progress by advocating for change and revival. This thematic emphasis aimed to tap into public dissatisfaction with the current administration's performance and position the PDP as a viable alternative to the status quo.



Generally, Tinubu's emphasis on continuity and stability aligned with his goal of reassuring party members and maintaining support within the APC. Atiku's advocacy for change and revival aimed to capitalise on public dissatisfaction and position himself as a transformative leader under PDP governance. Through their strategic use of language and rhetoric, both candidates sought to establish their legitimacy and promote their political ideologies within their respective parties and among the Nigerian electorate.

Comparison and Contrast of Discursive Strategies

In comparing and contrasting the discursive strategies employed by Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Atiku Abubakar in their acceptance speeches, several key differences and similarities emerge:

- a. *Emphasis on Collaboration vs. Change:* Tinubu's speech primarily focused on collaboration and continuity, aligning closely with the current administration's agenda and emphasising the need to build upon existing foundations. In contrast, Atiku's speech emphasised the need for change and a return to past prosperity under PDP governance. This reflects their divergent approaches to governance and their respective visions for Nigeria's future.
- b. *Direct Appeals to Party Loyalty and Unity:* Atiku's speech incorporated more direct appeals to party loyalty and unity within the PDP. He urged cooperation and reconciliation among fellow contestants, emphasising the importance of party unity to present a united front ahead of the general election. In contrast, Tinubu's speech emphasised inclusivity and collaboration among aspirants within the APC, highlighting the collective efforts of all aspirants and fostering a sense of camaraderie and solidarity within the party ranks.

Conclusion

The critical discourse analysis of acceptance speeches from the winners of Nigeria's 2022 presidential primary elections, representing the APC and PDP, illuminates significant contrasts in governance approaches and future visions. Through meticulous examination of linguistic nuances and discursive strategies, this analysis underscores the nuanced differences in communication styles between the two parties' leaders. Despite divergent ideological orientations, both winners articulate a shared commitment to addressing societal challenges and fostering unity, albeit within distinct rhetorical frameworks. Their speeches serve as potent tools for legitimising their leadership and advancing their political agendas within the complex landscape of Nigerian politics. The study's findings explored the role of language and discourse in shaping political narratives and public perception. This analysis unveils the intricate ways political leaders deploy rhetoric to assert authority, articulate ideology, and cultivate public support by dissecting acceptance speeches through a critical lens. The stark differences in linguistic features and rhetorical devices employed by the APC and PDP winners offer valuable insights into the broader dynamics of Nigerian politics, reflecting underlying power struggles, ideological divisions, and strategic imperatives. Moreover, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in political communication within Nigeria's democratic framework. By examining acceptance speeches as rhetorical artefacts, this study sheds light on the subtle nuances of language that underpin political discourse and shape collective understanding. Through a nuanced analysis of linguistic features, discursive structures, and ideological positioning, this research enriches our comprehension of Nigeria's multifaceted nature of political leadership and governance.



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