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Article

## Language, Power, and Identity: A Discourse Analysis of APC and PDP Slogans

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### Abstract

Language is a powerful tool through which political actors assert influence, shape power dynamics, and construct political identities. The study addresses the problem of how political slogans function as mechanisms of persuasion and ideological control in Nigeria's democratic process. Thus, this study examines the intersection of language, power, and identity in Nigerian political discourse through a critical analysis of slogans from the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretical framework, the study examines how political slogans function as linguistic tools for constructing party identities, asserting legitimacy, and mobilizing voter support. By analyzing the linguistic and ideological patterns within political slogans, this study highlights the role of language in shaping power dynamics and national identity in Nigeria's democratic landscape. Drawing on Nigerian elections from 1999 to 2023, the research employs qualitative discourse analysis to uncover the rhetorical and ideological strategies embedded in these slogans. Findings reveal that APC and PDP slogans are not merely campaign phrases but powerful instruments for reinforcing or challenging political structures. It is also revealed that through persuasive techniques such as emotional appeals, cultural references, and rhetorical framing, these slogans shape public perception, influence electoral behaviour, and sustain or contest dominant ideologies. The study concludes that navigating Nigeria's linguistic and cultural diversity is key to electoral success, as political language remains central to uniting, persuading, and shaping the nation's political landscape.

**Keywords:** Discourse analysis, language, power, identity, political slogans

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### Introduction

Language is a powerful tool in political discourse, shaping ideologies, influencing voter perception, and reinforcing power structures. The role of language in human communication is immeasurable, as it serves as a fundamental tool for connection and expression (Anjorin-Ojewole and Idowu, 2024). In Nigerian politics, where party competition is intense, political slogans serve as strategic linguistic devices that encapsulate party ideologies, communicate political promises and foster voter allegiance. These slogans are more than just campaign phrases; they are discursive tools that shape political narratives, construct party identities, and mobilize public sentiment. As the two dominant political parties in Nigeria, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) have consistently used slogans to assert their political authority, define their visions, and engage with the electorate.

This study explores the relationship between language, power, and identity in Nigerian political discourse through a discourse analysis of APC and PDP slogans. It



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seeks to analyze how these slogans are structured, the rhetorical and linguistic strategies they employ, and the socio-political meanings they convey. By examining the lexical choices, syntactic structures, and persuasive techniques used in these slogans, the study will uncover how political messages are framed to influence voter perception and decision-making. Understanding these slogans as strategic linguistic constructs will provide insight into the broader role of language in Nigerian politics.

A key focus of this research is the power dynamics embedded in political slogans. Political language is not neutral; it reflects and reinforces power relations. APC and PDP slogans are carefully designed to project authority, claim legitimacy, and challenge opposition narratives. Through the use of imperatives, metaphors, repetition, and presuppositions, these slogans create compelling messages that resonate with voters. By analyzing the power structures inherent in these slogans, this study will highlight how language is used as a tool for political dominance and ideological persuasion in Nigerian elections.

In addition to power, political slogans also play a crucial role in identity construction. Political parties use slogans to craft a national identity, shape public consciousness, and define the role of citizens in governance. Through slogans that emphasize themes such as unity, democracy, progress, and transformation, parties position themselves as representatives of national aspirations. This study will explore how APC and PDP slogans contribute to shaping voter identities and fostering a sense of political belonging.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader study of political discourse and forensic linguistics, providing deeper insights into how Nigerian political parties strategically use language to maintain influence, mobilize voters, and shape public opinion. By conducting a discourse analysis of APC and PDP slogans, this study will shed light on the linguistic strategies that drive political campaigns, revealing the intersection between language, power, and identity in Nigeria's evolving democratic landscape.

### **Language Use in the Nigerian Political Space**

Language is a powerful tool in political discourse, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal communication. Politicians use rhetoric, metaphors, and cultural references to simplify complex ideas and appeal to voters' emotions. In Nigeria, code-switching between English and indigenous languages enhances authenticity, while symbols like the APC's broom (unity) and PDP's umbrella (protection) reinforce party identity. Non-verbal elements such as gestures, colours, and logos play a crucial role in political campaigns, helping politicians connect with diverse audiences and shape public perception. The study of political language highlights how rhetoric influences political dynamics and voter behaviour. Scholars like Arnold Kling explore linguistic frameworks that define political groups, while other research examines how leaders' language reflects long-term political trends. Conceptual metaphors also play a key role in framing political issues and shaping discourse. In Nigeria's evolving democracy, political language is strategically used to mobilize support, sway public sentiment, and secure electoral victories, making its analysis essential for understanding democratic processes and political outcomes.

Ogolekwu's poem "NAIJATION AT 63" (2022) employs innovative linguistic techniques, such as clipping (e.g., "NAIJA" and "NATION"), to deliver a message that diverges from conventional political discourse. Language is crucial in political communication (Udofia, 2023). In Nigeria, political communication is fostered by the adoption of specialized vocabulary, polished as nomenclatures, to create a conducive atmosphere for political activities. Language plays a subtle yet crucial role in political activities, such as negotiating, debating, and wooing supporters in the political race (Idowu and Anjorin-Ojewole, 2024). Politicians use language strategically to convey their messages, influence public opinion, and mobilize support. This demonstrates the power of language in politics as both a constructive and destructive force. Understanding the linguistic strategies employed in political discourse is essential to comprehending how language shapes political narratives and public perceptions. Language and discourse are used in the context of political participation and civic engagement in Nigeria (Umofa, 2023). Power dynamics come into play as politicians use rhetoric to persuade and manipulate the electorate, while the electorate uses language to hold politicians accountable for their promises and actions.

Oliver (2017) emphasizes that language is integral to human society and significantly shapes public opinion and political outcomes. Politicians strategically use language to appeal to different demographic groups, and the electorate responds to these linguistic strategies. In the Nigerian context, understanding critical language analysis and the complex nature of political communication is crucial. By examining the language used by both politicians and the electorate, we can gain valuable insights into the power dynamics at play and the significant impact of language on political decision-making. Adeola and Muhyideen (2020) affirm that political leaders distinctively employ language to add extra-linguistic impact and speech power to their messages, thereby achieving their political ambitions.

In Nigerian political discourse, both politicians and the electorate use the country's linguistic diversity and creativity to express their views on political leaders. Various languages and language varieties are employed to convey opinions and show loyalty to preferred candidates. Online platforms are also used to share perspectives on political leadership, with the electorate drawing on Indigenous languages, code-mixing, Nigerian pidgin, Nigerian English, coinages, and other linguistic forms (Ugah, 2023). This creative linguistic strategy allows citizens to demonstrate support for their chosen candidates, showcasing the dynamic and resourceful nature of Nigerian political discourse.

Recent studies have examined the linguistic features of Nigerian political campaign slogans, focusing on key aspects such as persuasive rhetoric, strategic ambiguity, emotive language, and cultural appeals. These studies highlight how politicians use language to shape public perception, mobilize support, and reinforce ideological narratives while often avoiding concrete commitments.

### **1. Formal and Technical Vocabulary**

Politicians often employ formal and technical language to convey authority and expertise. Terms such as "governance," "electoral reform," and "economic development" are used to demonstrate a deep understanding of national issues. This strategic use of specialized terminology aims to build credibility and persuade voters

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of their leadership capabilities. According to Ogolekwu (2021), language serves as the defining tool in all aspects of human activity. Thus, Makinde Adejumo (2024) observe that political parties rely on linguistic appeals as tools for political discourse in their campaigns. This means that Makinde and Adejumo's work examines how political parties use specific language techniques, such as rhetoric, emotional appeals, and cultural references, to influence public opinion and communicate their messages effectively during election campaigns.

## **2. Persuasive Rhetoric**

The use of persuasive language is central to Nigerian political campaigns. Candidates craft speeches with emotive language and lofty promises to inspire and mobilize voters. This approach helps politicians connect with the electorate, build trust, and influence voting decisions. Ademilokun (2019) notes that political speeches often involve persuasive strategies to sway public opinion. Ademilokun's study underscores how politicians use persuasive language in speeches to shape public opinion, mobilize voters, and reinforce their political agendas.

## **3. Ethnic and Cultural Appeals**

In Nigeria's diverse society, politicians often incorporate local dialects, idioms, and cultural references into their speeches. This strategy fosters connections with specific ethnic groups and regions, creating a sense of solidarity and familiarity. Such linguistic approaches enable politicians to build alliances across Nigeria's ethnic and cultural divides, strengthening their political base. Makinde and Adejumo (2024) highlight the reliance on linguistic appeals in political discourse during campaigns. This explicates how politicians use specific language strategies, such as rhetoric, persuasive techniques, and cultural references, to influence public opinion and gain support during election campaigns.

## **4. Euphemisms and Doublespeak**

To navigate sensitive topics and avoid confrontation, politicians frequently use euphemisms and doublespeak. These linguistic strategies allow them to present a carefully crafted image and manage public perception while avoiding direct answers or controversial truths. For instance, terms like "collateral damage" may be used instead of "civilian casualties." Ajiboye (2020) discusses the use of language as a propaganda tool in electioneering.

## **5. Emotive Language**

Emotive language plays a central role in Nigerian election campaigns, evoking strong emotions and creating a sense of urgency among voters. Politicians use such language to rally support or demonize opponents, influencing public perception and voter behaviour. Ekpang and Ogolekwu (2024) argue that language is fluid and adaptable, functioning across various contexts regardless of the social situation. This demonstrates how politicians employ emotionally charged language in their speeches to inspire, persuade, and establish a connection with their audience.

## **6. Ambiguity and Vagueness**

Politicians often employ ambiguous and vague language, making broad statements that can be interpreted in multiple ways. This strategy allows them to appeal to a

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wide range of voters while avoiding specific commitments. Such linguistic tactics enable politicians to navigate the complexities of Nigeria's diverse political landscape effectively. Ademilokun (2019) discusses the use of language in political campaigns, highlighting the strategic ambiguity employed by politicians. The phrase means that politicians deliberately use vague language in campaigns to appeal to diverse audiences while avoiding specific commitments.

Politicians often employ strategic ambiguity in their campaign language, crafting messages that are broad and open to multiple interpretations. This deliberate vagueness allows them to attract a wide range of supporters, as different voter groups can interpret the message in ways that align with their expectations and desires. By avoiding specific commitments, politicians reduce the risk of being held accountable for precise promises while maintaining flexibility in policy decisions. This strategy is particularly useful in diverse societies like Nigeria, where ethnic, regional, and ideological differences require carefully worded statements to maximize appeal. Ultimately, strategic ambiguity enables politicians to maintain public support while minimizing the constraints of concrete pledges.

### **Power as Influencer in Political Slogans**

Power in political contexts refers to the ability to influence public opinion, shape political outcomes, and control narratives. It manifests through political platforms, media presence, institutional authority, and personal charisma. Politicians and political parties use power to set agendas, frame issues, and mobilize supporters. In Nigeria, power dynamics are often influenced by regional, ethnic, and economic factors. Political leaders leverage their authority and resources to consolidate support, often through patronage systems or alliances with influential community leaders. The use of power in electioneering campaigns is evident in the ability to dominate media narratives, control public discourse, and deploy resources for extensive grassroots mobilization. The interplay between power and language is critical in political campaigns. Powerful individuals or groups often shape language use to reinforce their authority and legitimacy. For example, a leader's ability to inspire confidence through persuasive rhetoric or assert dominance in debates reflects the use of language as a tool of power.

Power in political discourse is the ability to influence public opinion, control narratives, and assert dominance over political spaces. In Nigerian politics, the strategic use of language in slogans by the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) serves as a tool for power consolidation, mobilization, and legitimacy. Political slogans are not just campaign phrases; they embody ideological positioning and serve as a mechanism for reinforcing authority. Through discourse analysis, it becomes evident that the language of power in these slogans is carefully crafted to shape perceptions, establish dominance, and manipulate voter sentiment.

Ademilokun (2019) emphasizes that Nigerian political discourse operates at multiple levels—linguistic, sociological, psychological, and cultural—demonstrating how power is embedded in political language. APC's slogans, such as "Change" (2015) and "Next Level" (2019), exemplify a strategic exercise of power, positioning the party as

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a force of transformation and progress. These slogans create an impression of a forward movement, implicitly delegitimizing opposition parties and reinforcing APC's dominance in governance. Similarly, PDP's "Power to the People" functions as a counter-narrative, presenting itself as a party that returns political agency to the electorate while simultaneously challenging the ruling party's authority. This aligns with the study on manipulative rhetorical choices in Nigerian political speeches (2020), which underscores how language is deliberately crafted to project power and control narratives.

Beyond rhetoric, power is further exerted through the ability of these slogans to dictate political discourse. A critical discourse analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech (2023) reveals how political leaders use language to frame their leadership as legitimate and inevitable. APC's slogans, for instance, do not just seek to persuade; they seek to establish the party's rule as a natural political order. By contrast, PDP's slogans strategically attempt to destabilize this narrative, using language to project resilience and reclaim authority. The power struggle is, therefore, not just fought through political actions but through the very words and slogans that define party identities.

In election campaigns, power is also reflected in how these slogans resonate across different demographics. APC's "Renewed Hope" (2023) sought to consolidate power by appealing to national unity and economic recovery, reinforcing the party's grip on governance. PDP's counter-slogans aimed to challenge APC's monopoly by advocating for a return to its leadership, emphasizing themes of restoration and stability. This linguistic battle for dominance is a testament to the role of power in shaping political discourse. Ultimately, the discourse surrounding APC and PDP slogans highlights how power in Nigerian politics is exercised through language. Political slogans are more than just words; they are instruments of control, resistance, and ideological warfare. Through their strategic use, parties assert dominance, challenge opponents, and manipulate public perception, demonstrating the intricate relationship between language and power in political communication.

### **Identity as Influencer in Political Slogans**

Identity in political discourse reflects the sense of self, including beliefs, ideologies, interests, relationships, culture, and history. Political campaigns often revolve around identity politics, where candidates align their messages with the cultural, ethnic, or religious identities of their target audience. In Nigeria, identity is a critical factor in electioneering campaigns due to the country's diverse ethnic and religious composition. Politicians often appeal to voters' sense of belonging by emphasizing shared values, cultural heritage, and historical experiences. For instance, candidates from the Northern region may highlight their commitment to preserving Islamic values, while those from the South may focus on regional development and ethnic pride. Identity is also reflected in political slogans, campaign branding, and public appearances. For example, dressing in traditional attire during rallies symbolizes cultural alignment and fosters a connection with local communities. This strategic use of identity helps politicians establish trust and credibility among voters.

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Identity plays a crucial role in shaping political slogans, as they are designed to resonate with specific groups and reinforce collective belonging. Political parties craft slogans that reflect cultural, ethnic, ideological, and national identities to strengthen their appeal and mobilize support. According to Adeola and Muhyideen (2020), political slogans function as linguistic tools for identity construction, helping parties establish emotional connections with their supporters. In Nigeria, for instance, the slogans of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) strategically invoke identity markers to connect with voters.

APC's slogans, such as "Next Level" and "Renewed Hope," position the party as a progressive force aligned with national aspirations, appealing to a collective Nigerian identity (Eze, 2023). Conversely, PDP's "Power to the People" emphasizes democratic ideals and citizen empowerment, creating an inclusive identity that seeks to unify diverse groups under its banner (Ajiboye, 2020). These slogans not only define party ideologies but also shape voter perceptions by reinforcing political, regional, and ethnic affiliations. Odebunmi and Babajide (2020) argue that political slogans serve as a medium for power projection, where identity markers are strategically embedded to establish dominance and legitimacy. Ultimately, political slogans serve as powerful tools for constructing and reinforcing identity. By strategically leveraging identity markers, parties strengthen their connection with the electorate, shape political discourse, and influence voter behaviour. As Akinseye (2023) notes, slogans are not just words but ideological statements that communicate party values, national aspirations, and power structures.

### **Slogans as Linguistic Strategies in Electioneering Campaigns in Nigeria**

Election slogans have long been a crucial element of Nigerian politics, serving as strategic tools for candidates and political parties to connect with the electorate. Crafted through extensive research and planning by political strategists and marketing experts, these slogans play a vital role in communicating political messages, promoting manifestos, and persuading voters. By encapsulating key election priorities, they help candidates express their ideologies, visions, and aspirations for societal progress. The effectiveness of a slogan lies in its ability to capture attention, sustain interest, and leave a lasting impression on the electorate, ultimately shaping voter behaviour at the polls.

Scholars like Gounari (2018) and Nwamara & Etumnu (2022) highlight the persuasive power of political slogans, noting their ability to influence public perception across diverse social and economic backgrounds. They liken the strategic nature of electoral campaigns to military operations, where success requires meticulous planning and execution. Slogans often integrate words, phrases, and imagery that reflect key aspects of manifestos, utilizing connotations to achieve persuasive goals. Babajide & Kalajaiye's (2019) syntactic analysis of APC gubernatorial slogans from the 2019 elections revealed the strategic use of nominal groups to emphasize candidates' identities and engage voters psychologically. Their study underscores the need for critical awareness among the electorate, highlighting the manipulative potential of political language in shaping public opinion.

Political slogans function as rhetorical devices that blend propaganda and persuasive discourse to position candidates as credible and capable leaders. They are designed to capture the public mood, mobilize support, and inspire political action. Heeg (2019) and Hartig (2019) stress that effective slogans must be concise, visually appealing, and clear enough to resonate with voters, especially in high-traffic areas where exposure time is limited. Burroughs (2020) links political engagement to human reflection and virtue, aligning with Laswell's (2018) definition of politics as the strategic distribution of power and resources. Maksymenko et al. (2019) further emphasize that slogans influence decision-making by aligning voter sentiment with specific candidates or parties, ultimately solidifying political success through well-crafted messaging.

### **Socio-Political Importance of Slogans in Party Politics**

Globally, slogans have become a defining feature of electoral campaigns, extending beyond Nigeria. From Nelson Mandela's "Amandla Awethu" in the 1990s to Barack Obama's "Yes We Can" in 2008, slogans have left indelible marks on political campaigns. Historically rooted in Gaelic culture as *Slaugh-chairman* or "war cry", slogans have evolved into dynamic tools for legitimizing and mobilizing political action (Shankle, *American Mottoes and Slogans*). In communication studies, slogans are recognized as "imperative statements" with the ability to shape ideologies and rally support. Although many Nigerian politicians lack formal training in rhetoric, they intuitively grasp the persuasive potential of slogans. Nigerian political actors have skillfully incorporated slogans into their campaign discourse to resonate with voters, reflecting their hopes, frustrations, and aspirations.

Recent Nigerian elections further illustrate the significance of slogans. For instance, Bola Tinubu's informal slogan *Emilokan* (Yoruba for *It's my turn*), originally coined during a speech in Ogun State in June 2022, gained nationwide popularity. While Tinubu later adopted the official slogan *Renewed Hope*, the emotional resonance of "Emilokan" solidified its role as a rallying cry for his supporters. This phrase not only transcended regional boundaries but also dominated political discourse on social media, underscoring the lasting impact of well-crafted slogans.

The rhetorical strategy of asserting a rightful claim to leadership has historical precedents. For example, François Hollande, the Socialist Party candidate in France's 2012 presidential election, employed a similar tactic, declaring, *c'est notre tour de gouverner et de diriger la France* ("It's our turn to govern and lead France"). Both Tinubu and Hollande used this approach to mobilize support and validate their candidacies. However, slogans do not always guarantee electoral success. For instance, the Atikulated movement, which supported Atiku Abubakar's 2023 presidential bid, failed to secure victory despite its significant following. This highlights the complexities of political campaigns and the multifaceted nature of voter decision-making.

### **Slogans and the Broader Scope of Discourse Analysis**

Political slogans are essential tools in Nigerian electoral campaigns, serving as concise and memorable phrases that encapsulate a party's ideology, vision, or



objectives. They are designed to resonate with the electorate's aspirations and frustrations, simplifying complex political messages into digestible and repeatable forms. By crafting slogans that are catchy and emotionally appealing, political parties and candidates can establish strong connections with voters, making their messages more relatable. These slogans act as emotional bridges, allowing politicians to communicate their promises in a way that aligns with the daily realities of the electorate. As a result, slogans foster trust, influence voter behaviour, and mobilize support by transforming political ideals into tangible expectations.

Beyond their role as persuasive communication tools, slogans shape lasting impressions and help define party identities. They serve as rallying cries that mobilize grassroots support and encourage active participation in the electoral process. By leveraging cultural, linguistic, and historical references, slogans create a sense of familiarity and relatability, making them powerful instruments of political messaging. Their effectiveness lies in their ability to evoke emotions such as hope, pride, or even anger, ultimately framing a candidate or party as the most desirable choice. Through strategic use, slogans not only unify supporters but also inspire action, significantly influencing election outcomes and shaping Nigeria's political landscape. Below are the key functions of slogans in Nigerian politics:

- a. **Identity Creation:** Slogans help define the identity of a candidate, political party, or movement. For example, "**Power to the People**" (PDP) emphasized empowerment, inclusivity, and grassroots connection.
- b. **Unification:** They act as rallying points for supporters, creating a sense of belonging and solidarity.
- c. **Message Simplification:** Political slogans distil complex policies and ideologies into simple, memorable phrases.
- d. **Differentiation:** Slogans differentiate a candidate or party from their opponents, often highlighting unique strengths or values.
- e. **Motivation and Mobilization:** Slogans inspire action, whether it be voting, protesting, or supporting a cause.

In Nigeria, political slogans are deeply embedded in cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, making them vital for engaging specific demographics. These slogans serve as succinct yet powerful messages that convey a candidate's vision or critique opponents. Discourse analysis provides a valuable framework for examining their broader societal implications, exploring how language constructs collective identities and shapes political realities. Scholars such as Blommaert (2005), Ademilokun (2015), and Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) have contributed to understanding the persuasive function of political discourse, highlighting its role in reinforcing cultural values and shaping public opinion. Slogans offer deeper insights into how political identities are constructed and how messages resonate with different segments of the electorate, making them crucial tools in Nigerian political discourse.

## Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), based on the work of Fairclough (1989, 1995), provides a framework for examining how language, power, and identity interact in political discourse. It analyzes discourse through three dimensions: textual analysis

(linguistic features), discourse practice (production and reception), and social practice (broader societal influences). This approach helps uncover how political actors use language to maintain dominance, shape ideologies, and influence public perception. In Nigerian politics, APC and PDP slogans serve as powerful tools for constructing party identities, mobilizing support, and reinforcing ideological narratives. CDA reveals how these slogans legitimize political positions, appeal to emotions, and influence voter behaviour through linguistic strategies such as metaphors, repetition, and persuasive framing. By critically analyzing their production, circulation, and reception, CDA exposes how language functions as a mechanism of political control. It also highlights how party slogans construct narratives that either sustain or challenge dominant ideologies, ultimately shaping national identity and governance.

Research Methodology

This study explores how language constructs power and identity in Nigerian political discourse by analyzing slogans used by the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Using a qualitative research design, it applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) alongside rhetorical and linguistic analysis to assess how these slogans shape public perception and reinforce party identities. The study is framed by Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of CDA, which examines political discourse at textual, discursive, and social levels. It relies on secondary data sources, ensuring an objective and comprehensive evaluation of political messaging without direct interviews or surveys.

The research focuses on Nigerian elections from 1999 to 2023, selecting campaign materials, political speeches, media reports, and social media discourse through purposive sampling. This approach captures both formal political communication and public engagement with party slogans. Data analysis follows Miles and Huberman’s qualitative framework, involving data reduction, display, and conclusion verification. By categorizing slogans based on linguistic features and ideological themes, the study uncovers their persuasive strategies and sociopolitical impact. Ultimately, it highlights how APC and PDP slogans function as instruments of power, identity construction, and voter mobilization within Nigeria’s political landscape.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Table Contains Political Parties' Slogans

Political party	Slogan	Meaning/effect
PDP	Power to the People"	This was the official slogan of the PDP and emphasized democracy, empowerment, and returning control of governance to the electorate after years of military rule. Emphasize democratic values, grassroots empowerment, and the redistribution of authority to the common populace

	The Man to Rebuild Nigeria"	Obasanjo was marketed as a leader who could restore stability and rebuild the nation following decades of political instability and economic challenges under military regimes. The slogan "The Man to Rebuild Nigeria" is a targeted political slogan, conveying a strong message of capability, hope, and national development.
	"Unity and Progress"	This slogan emphasized Obasanjo's role in fostering national unity and economic development. Political and social contexts to emphasize collective harmony and forward development.
	"Goodluck Na Goodluck"	This name played on the literal meaning of his first name, "Goodluck," suggesting that his presidency would bring fortune and prosperity to Nigerians. It was a catchy and relatable way to emphasize optimism about his leadership, more personal and informal identifiers.
	"Breath of Fresh Air"	This slogan presented Jonathan as a break from the old political order, representing hope, progress, and a new beginning for Nigeria.
	"No Vacancy in Aso Rock"	This slogan is used by his supporters to assert confidence in his re-election bid, implying that his leadership was still necessary.
APC	Change	The official campaign slogan of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2015, encapsulated the promise of a complete overhaul of Nigeria's governance, economy, and security situation.
	"Let's Build Nigeria Together"	This slogan was used to emphasize collective responsibility and Buhari's call for unity in rebuilding the nation.
	"Sai Buhari, Sai Next Level"	A popular combination of his nickname "Sai Buhari" with the campaign slogan "Next Level," it was used to energize supporters and reinforce the message of continuity and progress.
	"Renewed Hope Ambassador"	This slogan is Linked to his 2023 campaign slogan, this nickname portrayed Tinubu as a beacon of optimism and a leader capable of restoring Nigerians' confidence in governance.
	"Emi Lokan" (It's My Turn)	Derived from a statement Tinubu made during a campaign speech in Ogun State, this phrase became a defining chant of his campaign. It symbolized his claim to the presidency after decades of contributions to Nigerian politics.
	"Renewed Hope 2023"	The official slogan of Tinubu's campaign, promised to rebuild trust in governance and deliver a brighter future for Nigerians by addressing challenges such as insecurity, unemployment, and economic instability.

	"From Lagos to Nigeria"	A slogan emphasizing how Tinubu's success in Lagos could serve as a blueprint for national transformation.
PDP	"Let's Get Nigeria Working Again"	The official slogan of Atiku's 2019 campaign under the People's Democratic Party (PDP), reflected his focus on reviving Nigeria's economy, creating jobs, and improving infrastructure.
	"Experience You Can Trust"	Emphasizes Atiku's extensive political and business acumen, showcasing his proven leadership in governance and entrepreneurial success. This slogan positions him as a reliable and seasoned choice, blending administrative expertise with economic insight to address national challenges effectively.
	"One Nigeria"	A slogan promoting national unity and downplaying ethnic or regional divides.
	"Rescue Nigeria"	This slogan presented Atiku as the solution to what was perceived as ineffective governance under Muhammadu Buhari.

## Data Analysis and Discussion

### Power and Ideological Framing in Political Parties' Slogans

Political slogans serve as discursive tools that encapsulate the ideologies and aspirations of political parties while projecting power and authority. They are crafted to resonate with voters' emotions, address societal challenges, and legitimize political dominance.

### People's Democratic Party (PDP)

**Slogans:** "Power to the People", "Unity and Progress" and "Goodluck Na Goodluck".

**i. Power Dynamics:** This slogan "Power to the People" shifts the locus of power from the elite to the electorate, positioning the PDP as a pro-democracy party that champions the empowerment of ordinary Nigerians. Also, "Unity and power" as used in the slogan highlights the PDP's claim to national leadership capable of fostering cohesion among Nigeria's ethnically and religiously diverse population. The slogan Goodluck Na Goodluck personalizes politics, using Jonathan's first name to evoke optimism and relatability.

**ii. Ideologies:** The slogan "Power to the People" emphasizes participatory governance and democratic values, contrasting with the authoritarianism of Nigeria's military past. The slogan "Unity and Progress" promotes stability, collective advancement, and economic development. The ideology behind "Goodluck Na Goodluck" positions leadership as a matter of destiny and trust in individual capability.

**iii. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Effects:** By framing the slogan as a collective action, the PDP legitimizes its role as a steward of democracy and seeks to cultivate trust among disenfranchised citizens. The CDA's effect of Unity and Progress works to neutralize divisions while portraying the party as a unifying force critical for national progress. CDA's insight in Goodluck Na Goodluck signifies the informal

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tone of the slogan which reduces the hierarchical gap between leader, voter and the result by fostering an emotional connection.

### **All Progressives Congress (APC)**

**Slogans:** Change, Renewed Hope 2023, Emi Lokan (It's My Turn), "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges" & "Leadership with Compassion" and "The Architect of Modern Lagos

**i. Power Dynamics:** The slogan "change" conveys a promise of transformation, discrediting the ruling party (PDP) while positioning APC as the harbinger of reform. Also, Renewed Hope 2023 as a slogan used by the APC aims to reclaim optimism and agency for the electorate, emphasizing APC's ability to restore confidence in governance. The slogan Emi Lokan (It's My Turn) personalizes political entitlement, asserting Tinubu's claim to leadership based on contributions to Nigerian politics. The slogans "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges" and "Leadership with Compassion" present Hajiya Aisha Dahiru (Binani) as a unifying leader capable of overcoming gender, ethnic, and social divisions. In Nigeria's male-dominated political landscape, these slogans challenge traditional power dynamics by emphasizing inclusivity and empathy over authoritarian leadership. Binani is portrayed as a leader who prioritizes the welfare of marginalized groups, fostering a governance style based on care and service rather than coercion. Similarly, "Architect of Modern Lagos" frames Sanwo-Olu as a visionary leader shaping the state's future. By positioning him as the "architect," the slogan underscores his authority and influence over Lagos' development, reinforcing a centralized leadership model. It presents him as the key decision-maker driving modernization, elevating his role in shaping the city's progress and distinguishing him from other political figures.

**ii. Ideologies:** APC's slogan "Change" signifies dissatisfaction with the status quo, advocating systemic reforms in governance, the economy, and security. "Renewed Hope 2023" emphasizes continuity and pragmatic leadership to address socio-economic challenges, while "Emi Lokan" (It's My Turn) reflects Nigeria's rotational leadership ideology. Slogans like "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges" and "Leadership with Compassion" promote progressive and inclusive governance, particularly emphasizing feminism and empowerment. Binani's campaign challenges traditional political norms, advocating for diverse and representative leadership. Similarly, Sanwo-Olu's governance is framed through a technocratic ideology, with the slogan positioning him as an "architect" of modern urban development, reinforcing a methodical, well-planned approach to city transformation.

**iii. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Effects:** A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Nigerian political party slogans reveals how language constructs power and legitimacy. "Change" creates a binary narrative of failure versus progress, framing APC as the moral alternative. "Renewed Hope 2023" contrasts hope with despair, subtly critiquing past administrations while reinforcing APC's legitimacy. "Emi Lokan" (It's My Turn) is exclusionary, reinforcing elite dominance but appealing to loyalists who see Tinubu as deserving of leadership. Slogans like "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges" and "Leadership with Compassion" challenge traditional gender roles, redefining leadership as inclusive and unifying. By positioning power as

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service rather than transactional politics, these slogans reshape political discourse, promoting governance centred on progress, unity, and social transformation.

A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Nigerian political party slogans highlights their role in reflecting power dynamics, ideologies, and voter engagement strategies. PDP emphasizes democracy and unity, APC focuses on transformation and leadership entitlement, while Binani's slogan challenges gender norms. Sanwo-Olu projects a technocratic vision, and parties like Labour and NNPP advocate grassroots empowerment and systemic reform. These slogans leverage emotional appeal and cultural values to legitimize authority, inspire trust, and mobilize support.

### **Persuasive, Rhetorical Strategies, and Emotional Appeals in APC and PDP Slogans**

Political slogans in Nigeria serve as powerful tools for shaping party identity and influencing voter behaviour through emotional appeal and rhetorical strategies. The PDP's slogan, "Power to the People," emphasizes grassroots empowerment and democratic participation, reassuring voters of their influence in governance. It fosters unity across ethnic and social lines while challenging elite dominance. This slogan instils a sense of ownership in the electorate, encouraging active participation in shaping the nation's future through democratic processes. Similarly, APC's "Renewed Hope 2023" aims to restore faith in governance by addressing past challenges and projecting a vision of national progress. The slogan's emphasis on "hope" reassures voters that positive change is possible, while "renewed" suggests a revival of lost trust. It appeals to a broad audience, from youth seeking opportunities to older generations desiring stability. Both slogans strategically use language to establish political legitimacy, inspire voter confidence, and mobilize support by resonating with the electorate's aspirations and emotions.

### **Catchy Phrases, Cultural References, and Visionary Messaging in Political Slogans**

Political slogans are an essential part of campaign strategies, particularly in a country as diverse as Nigeria. A well-crafted slogan must be memorable, relatable, and visionary, often drawing on cultural references, wordplay, and promises of transformation to connect with voters. These slogans not only capture the essence of a candidate's message but also build emotional connections with the electorate. This analysis focuses on how various Nigerian political slogans, such as "Goodluck Na Goodluck," "Sanwo Eko," "Unity and Progress," "One Nigeria," and "From Lagos to Nigeria," utilize these strategies effectively.

#### **A. "Goodluck Na Goodluck": Wordplay, Fortune, and Relatability**

The slogan "Goodluck Na Goodluck" became popular during Goodluck Jonathan's campaign. It cleverly used wordplay and cultural nuances to create an informal yet impactful message.

##### **➤ Wordplay and Memorability**

The repetition of "Goodluck" served as a pun, reinforcing Jonathan's first name while associating his leadership with the concept of good fortune. This linguistic creativity made the slogan easy to remember and repeat, which is a key factor in political marketing. The slogan's simplicity ensured it resonated with all demographics, including rural voters and those with limited formal education.

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➤ **Relatability and Informality**

By adopting a conversational tone, the slogan bridged the gap between the elite nature of politics and the everyday language of ordinary Nigerians. This informality made Jonathan appear approachable and in touch with the people. The use of Pidgin English, a widely spoken informal language in Nigeria, further enhanced its relatability, ensuring the message reached a broader audience across ethnic and linguistic lines.

➤ **Emphasizing Fortune and Optimism**

The slogan subtly conveyed the idea that Jonathan's leadership brought luck and prosperity to the country. It instilled optimism in voters, suggesting that re-electing him would lead to continued success and good fortune for Nigeria.

**B. "Unity and Progress" and "One Nigeria" (PDP): Vision for National Harmony**

Both slogans "Unity and Progress" and "One Nigeria" are staples of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). They emphasize collective harmony, inclusivity, and a unified vision for national development, making them timeless and aspirational.

➤ **Emphasizing National Unity**

"Unity and Progress" reflects the PDP's vision of bringing Nigerians together across ethnic, religious, and regional divides. By focusing on "unity," the slogan addressed Nigeria's long-standing challenges with fragmentation and division. Similarly, "One Nigeria" reinforced the idea of collective identity and harmony, promoting a sense of belonging among all Nigerians regardless of their backgrounds.

➤ **Progress as a Shared Goal**

Both slogans tied unity to progress, suggesting that national development could only be achieved when Nigerians worked together. This message appealed to voters who valued stability and a collaborative approach to governance. By emphasizing progress, the slogans also promised tangible benefits such as economic growth, improved infrastructure, and social advancement, making them forward-looking and inspiring.

**Assertion of Dominance and Confidence in Victory through Political Slogans**

Political slogans are a key tool for communicating confidence, strength, and inevitability in campaigns. By projecting certainty about their candidate's success, these slogans aim to rally supporters, demoralize opponents, and create a perception of momentum. Two notable examples from Nigerian politics "No Vacancy in Aso Rock" (PDP) and "Emi Lokan" (APC) serve as case studies of how political messaging is crafted to assert dominance and inevitability while appealing to the electorate's emotions and logic.

i. **"No Vacancy in Aso Rock" (PDP): Signaling Confidence in Continuity**

The PDP's slogan, "No Vacancy in Aso Rock," was a strategic message during Goodluck Jonathan's re-election campaign, emphasizing continuity and reinforcing the party's dominance. By declaring the presidency as "occupied," the slogan projected strength and stability, leveraging Jonathan's incumbency to discourage opposition efforts. It instilled confidence in PDP supporters, fostering unity and energizing the party base to secure re-election. Beyond rallying support, the slogan served as a psychological tactic to intimidate opposition candidates and weaken their resolve. It appealed to voters who preferred stability over the uncertainties of

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leadership transitions, positioning Jonathan's administration as the reliable choice. By signalling inevitability, the PDP aimed to demoralize opponents while strengthening its image as the party of power and continuity.

ii. **"Emi Lokan" (APC): Assertive Entitlement and Leadership Legitimacy**

The slogan "Emi Lokan" (Yoruba for "It's My Turn") became a defining message of Bola Ahmed Tinubu's presidential campaign under the All Progressives Congress (APC). It highlighted Tinubu's belief in his right to lead, rooted in his political contributions and sacrifices. The slogan's simplicity and use of Yoruba connected directly with Tinubu's primary base of supporters, particularly in the South-West. It drew on cultural values of respect for hierarchy and recognition of past contributions, resonating strongly in a region where elders and leaders are revered. Beyond its regional appeal, "Emi Lokan" carried a universal tone of confidence and entitlement, sending a clear message to all Nigerians about Tinubu's readiness to assume leadership.

Tinubu's campaign strategically used the slogan to frame his candidacy within the context of Nigeria's informal power-sharing arrangement, which often rotates leadership between the North and South. "Emi Lokan" suggested that after Muhammadu Buhari's tenure (a Northerner), it was the South's "turn" to produce the next president, with Tinubu positioning himself as the most qualified candidate to take over. This narrative appealed to voters who supported equitable power distribution across regions. The slogan also served as a reminder of Tinubu's extensive political contributions, particularly his role in shaping the APC and supporting Buhari's presidential campaigns. "Emi Lokan" framed his candidacy as a reward for years of sacrifice.

## **Use of Metaphors and Symbolism in Political Slogans**

In political communication, metaphors and symbolism serve as powerful tools for simplifying complex ideas and creating emotionally resonant messages. Nigerian political slogans often rely on these rhetorical devices to convey a candidate's vision, values, and goals in a way that is memorable and relatable. By appealing to voters' emotions, experiences, and aspirations, metaphors help craft narratives of hope, transformation, and unity, strengthening the connection between political figures and the electorate. One notable example is the PDP's slogan, "Breath of Fresh Air," which was used to position Goodluck Jonathan as a symbol of renewal and progress. This metaphor evokes imagery of rejuvenation and relief, suggesting a clean break from the past and a promise of better governance. In a country grappling with political stagnation and inefficiency, the phrase resonated deeply with Nigerians, symbolizing transparency, accountability, and the hope for national transformation. The universality of "fresh air" as a concept made the slogan accessible to all, regardless of ethnicity, language, or socioeconomic status.

Metaphors in political slogans serve multiple functions: they condense intricate political messages into easily digestible terms, evoke emotions such as hope and trust, and help mobilize voter support. They also transcend cultural and linguistic barriers, making them effective in Nigeria's diverse society. However, their success depends on perceived credibility – if voters do not see tangible results, slogans risk being dismissed as empty rhetoric. Despite this, metaphors remain a cornerstone of



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political messaging, shaping public narratives and reinforcing candidates' political identities.

## **Continuity and Progress in Political Slogans**

### **a. Reassurance Through Continuity: "Sai Buhari, Sai Next Level" (APC)**

The slogan "Sai Buhari, Sai Next Level," used by the All Progressives Congress (APC) during President Muhammadu Buhari's re-election campaign, combines loyalty with progress. "Sai Buhari" ("Only Buhari" in Hausa) reinforces trust in his leadership, particularly in Northern Nigeria, where he is seen as a disciplined, anti-corruption figure. The phrase "Next Level" signifies ambition and the promise of further development, appealing to voters who desire both continuity and tangible improvements in governance. By blending Hausa and English, the slogan maintains cultural relevance while broadening its reach.

### **b. Collective Progress: "Let's Build Nigeria Together" (APC)**

This APC slogan emphasizes national unity and shared responsibility in governance. "Let's Build Nigeria Together" conveys the idea that progress requires collaboration between the government and citizens, a crucial message in a country often divided along ethnic and regional lines. The word "build" evokes images of growth and transformation, aligning with Buhari's focus on long-term development. The inclusive tone of the phrase fosters a sense of collective ownership, motivating people from diverse backgrounds to engage in nation-building efforts.

### **c. The Impact of Continuity and Progress Slogans**

Slogans like "Sai Buhari, Sai Next Level" and "Let's Build Nigeria Together" help stabilize political narratives by reassuring citizens of leadership consistency. They reinforce voter loyalty by presenting governance as a continuous journey rather than a series of disruptions. However, the success of such messaging depends on tangible achievements. If voters perceive a gap between promises and results, slogans may lose credibility. The emphasis on progress must be backed by visible improvements to sustain trust and engagement.

### **d. Linguistic and Cultural Dynamics**

Language and culture play vital roles in shaping the effectiveness of political slogans. "Sai Buhari" resonates strongly with Hausa-speaking voters, while the inclusion of English in both slogans enhances accessibility. The emotional appeal in these messages—whether through trust in leadership or the call for collective action—strengthens voter engagement. In a multilingual society like Nigeria, strategically crafted slogans foster a sense of national unity while addressing diverse political and cultural contexts. Slogans that balance continuity with progress, such as "Sai Buhari, Sai Next Level" and "Let's Build Nigeria Together," effectively shape voter perception and mobilization. However, their long-term impact depends on whether political promises translate into real change. The ability of such slogans to inspire and unite citizens underscores the importance of strategic language use in political communication.

## **Discussion of Findings**

Findings revealed that Nigerian political party slogans serve as powerful discursive tools that shape public perception, reinforce ideological positions, and establish

power relations within the political landscape. Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study uncovered how these slogans strategically employ language to project authority, mobilize voters, and construct narratives of continuity, transformation, and inclusivity. One key finding is that slogans from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) emphasize democracy, national unity, and grassroots empowerment. For example, "Power to the People" frames the PDP as a pro-democracy party, shifting the perception of power from the elite to the electorate. Similarly, "Unity and Progress" presents the party as a unifying force in Nigeria's ethnically and religiously diverse society. The personalization of politics, as seen in "Goodluck Na Goodluck," creates emotional resonance by using wordplay and informal language to enhance relatability and optimism.

Conversely, slogans from the All Progressives Congress (APC) focus on themes of change, leadership entitlement, and national transformation. The slogan "Change" positioned the APC as a reformist party, contrasting it with the ruling PDP, while "Renewed Hope 2023" aimed to restore public trust in governance by projecting optimism. "Emi Lokan" (It's My Turn) asserted a sense of political entitlement and played into Nigeria's informal power-sharing dynamics, reinforcing the legitimacy of Bola Ahmed Tinubu's presidential bid. Additionally, gender-focused slogans like "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges" and "Leadership with Compassion" challenged traditional power structures by positioning female candidates like Aisha Dahiru (Binani) as unifying and empathetic leaders. Findings also show that political slogans utilize persuasive rhetorical strategies, including emotional appeals, cultural references, and metaphors, to engage voters. The PDP's "No Vacancy in Aso Rock" and the APC's "Emi Lokan" exemplify how slogans assert dominance and signal political inevitability. Metaphors like "Breath of Fresh Air" (PDP) frame candidates as symbols of renewal, while technocratic language in "Architect of Modern Lagos" (APC) elevates Sanwo-Olu's leadership as visionary and strategic.

Furthermore, continuity and progress are central themes in Nigerian political messaging. Slogans such as "Sai Buhari, Sai Next Level" (APC) and "Let's Build Nigeria Together" reinforce stability and collective governance. However, the effectiveness of such slogans depends on their alignment with tangible political achievements. If voters perceive a gap between slogans and reality, their credibility diminishes. Overall, the study highlights how Nigerian political party slogans reflect power dynamics, ideological struggles, and voter engagement strategies. By leveraging linguistic and cultural nuances, these slogans shape electoral discourse, influence political allegiance, and reinforce party identities.

## Conclusion

The strategic use of slogans by Nigerian politicians highlights how language serves as a powerful tool for political manoeuvring, control, and voter persuasion. Through carefully crafted slogans, political parties construct narratives that reinforce their ideologies, project desired values, and shape public perception. These slogans tap into deep socio-political emotions, aspirations, and cultural experiences, fostering voter loyalty and influencing electoral outcomes. Rooted in historical and regional significance, they help politicians establish trust and emotional connections with the

electorate, often invoking a sense of identity and belonging. While these linguistic strategies may not always align with actual policies, they play a crucial role in shaping political images and mobilizing support. This study concludes that navigating Nigeria's linguistic and cultural diversity effectively is key to electoral success, as political language remains central to uniting, persuading, and shaping the nation's political landscape.

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