

A Pragmatic Analysis of Selected Campaign Posters of the Two Major Nigerian Political Parties

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Abstract

The print media, by means of images, colour, symbols, and texts which communicate specific messages to the electorates, no doubt, play an important role in electioneering campaigns. However, this special way of using language is yet to receive adequate research attention in linguistics. In addition, most studies on campaign posters adopt multimodal, semiotic, stylistic, and critical discourse analytic approaches, thereby excluding the domain of pragmatics. Therefore, the present paper is an attempt to examine the pragmatic import of the textual components of the selected campaign posters of the two main Nigerian political parties. Twelve campaign posters were selected purposively across two successive periods of election in Nigeria, 2019 and 2023. McCombs and Shaw's (1972) theory of Agenda setting was adopted for the analysis of selected data. The study found that posters are not mere pictures and colour, they convey in-depth messages which are means of appealing to the electorates. The multiple modes in the selected posters prove to be a potent weapon to enhance the persuasive nature and the pragmatic import of the discourse. In addition, the pragmatic import of the selected data makes a lot to be communicated with fewer words as the contents of the posters are subjected to contextual explication of the Nigerian political landscape. The study concluded that due to the availability of the visual resources contained in campaign posters, fewer words are required to persuade or trigger the reaction of the electorates.

Keywords: *Agenda Setting; Print media; Electioneering campaign, Campaign posters.*

Introduction

As language forms the basis of communication, politics is thus affected by language. Thus, the language of politics is examined to know how both politicians and commentators describe political stances; how they explore some of the most common linguistic features used in political speeches; and how they deployed various written texts including posters and pamphlets. Political discourse investigates the relationships between language and politics. Language is used to form a state and is enacted in various ways that help achieve political objectives. To politicians, their primary target is power control, in the sense that, they strategize how to win elections and form government. To do this, different forms of campaign are employed including the use of posters to project both the popularity and acceptability of contestants in elections.

In view of the above, campaign posters are used principally to market the candidacy of contestants and employ certain discursive strategies that are peculiar to this unique form of communication. One fundamental factor for consideration regarding campaign posters is the prevailing circumstances underpinning the political situation at any given situation. It is in recognition of this that the study adopts the pragmatic approach for the analysis of its data. This is because context is the sole of pragmatic investigation as removing context takes us back to semantics.

Therefore, the objectives of this study, among others, are to investigate selected campaign posters of the two major Nigerian political parties from a pragmatic point of view with a view to examining how the print media contribute to meaning explication in political discourses. More explicitly, this study investigates the pragmatic intent of the lexical items used in campaign posters to persuade the electorates. In addition, the study examines the connection or interface between campaign posters and the situation of use or the prevailing social reality underpinning the selected posters. Furthermore, it accounts for the linguistic features that are synonymous with the political discourse, with a particular reference to campaign posters.

Methodology

This study is qualitative analytical in approach as no statistical analysis is captured. The data were collected spatially in two successive periods of electioneering campaign in Nigeria: the 2019 and 2023 electioneering campaign periods. Purposive data sampling procedure was used in obtaining data as campaign posters containing rich visual elements and linguistic resources were consciously selected. Six posters were selected for each of the political parties under consideration, the All-Progressive Congress APC, and the Peoples' Democratic Party PDP, making a total of twelve (12) posters all together. Also, each of the political parties has six (6) posters, three (3) of which were collected from the 2019 and 2023 electioneering campaign periods. Datum One represents the campaign posters for the All-Progressive Congress while Datum Two represents the posters for the Peoples' Democratic Party. The data for the study are analysed through an adaptation of the theoretical tenets of McCombs and Shaw's (1972) Agenda Setting Theory constituting the Object and Framing Strategies.

Review of Literature

The concepts of pragmatics and campaign posters are central to this study; therefore, definitions of pragmatics and campaign poster as genres of political discourse are discussed with a view to providing clear background by contextualising the present study. Pragmatics is the study of language in context, meaning in communication and the use of natural language in communication. The scope of pragmatics extends to the study of the relations between languages and their users; the study of how literal and non-literal aspects of linguistic meaning are determined by principles that refer to the physical or social context in which language is used and the study of the ways in which context contributes to meaning. To describe pragmatics, Poole (1999, p. 34) submits that human beings communicate more than they say explicitly. Therefore, one can say that pragmatics involves how we say what we mean and mean what we say.

Crystal (1997, p. 301) describes pragmatics as “the study of language from the viewpoint of users, especially the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interactions and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication”. Mey (2001, p. 6) postulates that “pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society”. It is about how the prevailing societal circumstances regulate, affect and effectualise human language use. This means that a people socio-cultural reality is a strong determinant of language use of the group. Put differently, the prevailing social reality surrounding language use is a determining factor of what to be expressed with language.

Political Discourse

Velerevna (2022) citing Baranov defines political discourse as “the totality of all speech acts used in political discussions, as well as rules of public policy, sanctified by tradition and proven experience. The word politician is prominent in the above definition and this implies that political discourse cannot be studied in isolation of politician who author them. In this regard that van Dijk posits that political discourse is identified by its authors, viz., politicians. Kirvalidze and Samnidze (2016) define political discourse as “a language of mass media or other institutions that is largely used in social and political spheres of communication. This definition emphasises language, mass media (including electronic), and political spheres. From the above definitions, political discourse can be explained as a conscious or deliberate use of language to achieve political desires of the people (politicians) who use it. Political discourse encapsulates campaign speeches, acceptance of nomination speeches, swearing-in speeches, campaign posters, and a lot more.

Campaign poster is one among several other linguistic means by which politicians communicate with members of the society. Lirola (2016a) defines political posters as “a means through which parties and candidates present themselves to the electorate. This linguistic material constitutes both written text, and non-verbal forms such as gestures, colours, and other modes of human communication. As a result of these all-encompassing characteristics of campaign posters, there

is need for a pragmatic approach to the interpretation of the linguistic components of campaign posters. Lirola (2016b citing Roh, et al 2019) posits that political posters are multimodal texts that “are intended to convey directive messages to trigger viewers’ courses of action”.

There have avalanche of literatures on political discourses among which is Gattermann and Vliegenthart’s (2019) research which centres on the overtime variation in content and style of European Parliament election campaign posters in the Netherlands and Italy. Their sample comprises 333 campaign posters across a total of 59 political parties. which Except for personalisation elements, the results of the study show that professionalization trends hardly manifest in the extent to which election posters change over time by means of featuring party logos, explicit calls to vote, European symbols, policy issues or Eurosceptic messages.

Omozuwa and Ezejideaku (2008) attempt a stylistic analysis of the language of political campaigns in Nigeria: Evidence from the 2007 general elections. The study posits that politicians employ linguistic devices such as exaggeration, rhetorical questions, vague utterances, abusive utterances, repetition and colloquialism, coinages, and pidginised expressions among others in their quest to market themselves and de-market their opponents. Comparing Omozuwa and Ezejideaku to the present study, there are remarkable differences in terms of linguistic approach, theoretical framework, and data for analysis. For instance, Omozuwa and Ezejideaku use stylistic approach, while the present study opts for pragmatic approach. In addition, the elections that constitute data of the study are different. While Omozuwa and Ezejideaku use 2003 campaign posters, the present study uses 2023 campaign posters.

Also, Ajayi (2014) in a study entitled language and politicking: a pragmatic analysis of political texts in political posters and jingles in Oyo state, Nigeria. In this study, the researcher attempts a pragmatic analysis of political texts in political posters and jingle(s) of gubernatorial candidates for 2015 General Elections in Oyo state, Nigeria, within the purview of Mey’s (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory. The study finds that the language of politicians in the state is characterised by practs such as accusation, challenge, abuse, warning, persuasion, commendation, and condemnation which draw on contextual features such as Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK),

Shared Cultural Knowledge (SCK), and Metaphor (MPH). The researcher concludes that politicians often employ language to attack one another's personalities, rather than address issues that could help move the society forward.

Akinwotu (2018) investigates language and style in political inaugurals: a study of inaugural speeches of Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo state, Nigeria. These studies are related not only because they belong to studies of the genres of political discourses but also because they all examine how language is used to appeal to the electorates. Unlike the previous studies, this study is another attempt to evaluate language use in the political sphere from a pragmatic perspective. Most of the previous studies multimodal or semiotic approach to the study of campaign posters. A good number of others also use stylistic as an approach, while some deploy critical discourse analytic template for the study of campaign posters. More specifically, this study examines selected campaign posters from a pragmatic perspective through the deployment of the theoretical tenets of McCombs and Shaw's (1972) theory of Agenda Setting.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) introduce the Agenda Setting Theory in a survey and content analysis of media coverage of the 1968 presidential campaign. According to McCombs (2003), in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. The focus of the Agenda Setting Theory can be categorised into two. The first is the influence of the media reports on the people. Second is the media role in shaping the nature of people's thoughts on issues. The media grab attention and implant thoughts in people's minds about some pertinent issues. This explains why Agenda-setting theory explains the relationship between patterns of news coverage and the people's beliefs about what is currently most important in society (Potter, 2019). He avers that:

The theory claims that the media agenda influences the public agenda. The media agenda is reflected by what is emphasised most in news coverage.

The public agenda is reflected by what issues people think the most important ones in society are at a given time. Thus the public's agenda is shaped by the media agenda as people come to believe that the issues most emphasised in news coverage are the most important issues for them to think about.

Priming and framing have been identified as the two major tenets of the Agenda Setting Theory. The former refers to the objects of a given media content. Simply put, the media prioritise certain events such that people have the impression that a particular news item is more important or more valuable than others. This refers to the heading or headlines or special news features, which drives the news report. Contrarily, framing refers to the way in which news content is contextualised within a same frame of reference. Audience of news reports adopt frames to see the world created in a report in peculiar ways (Scheufele, 2000).

Analysis and Discussion

The data are in two different categories. Datum one, which represents the totality of posters for the All-Progressive Congress, constitutes two samples. Sample one of datum one represents the 2019 poster for the APC presidential candidate while sample two represents those of the 2023 general elections. The second data group, datum two also constitutes two groups each, samples 3 and 4, which represent the 2019 and 2023 categories of presidential campaign posters for the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP).

Datum 1: APC Posters

Sample 1: 2019 Presidential Election



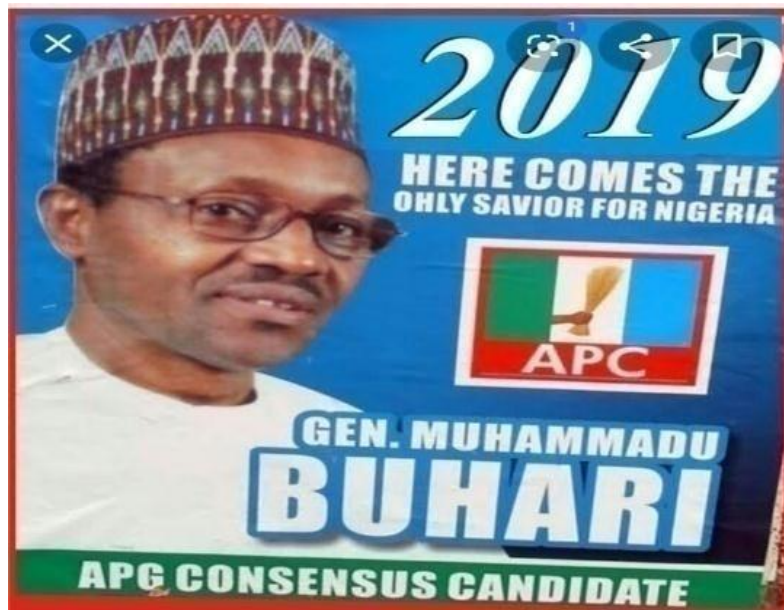
Data Transcript: Next Month Is FEBUHARI #LETSMAKEITHAPPEN

Table 1: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 1a

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The theme of the poster above is a reminder.	<p>The theme is indicated through the affirmation and emphasis placed on the introductory expression “next month is”.</p> <p>Not only a reminder but also a statement of appeal. This is achieved using a pun.</p>	<p>i. Declarative expression: <i>Next month is FEBUHARI</i></p> <p>ii. Capitalisation: <i>FEBUHARI & LETSMAKEITHAPPEN</i></p> <p>iii. Colouring of texts (red and black)</p> <p>iv. Shared imperative lets male it happen— (the choice of ‘us’ in ‘lets’ projects politeness)</p> <p>v. Morphology/Pun: the word February has been coined to resemble the name of the aspirant Buhari –<i>FE-BUHARI</i>. In addition,</p>

		“FE” in Yoruba means like or to like. So, the expression is used to entrench the likeness of the candidates in the minds of the electorates.
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From the tabular presentation of the framing strategies adopted in the election poster above, the choice of declarative expression, constituting both coinage and pun is not only to inform but also to appeal to the electorates to endorse the candidature of the persona by casting their votes for him. ‘FE’, in the coinage “FEBUHARI simply means “love Buhari”, hence the entire sentence “Next Month Is FEBUHARI” communicates a special message when interpreted in the Yoruba language, it means “next month, you must love Buhari”. This statement is further corroborated by the statement in hash tag # *LETSMAKEITHAPPEN* which is a stylistic feature called foregrounding being used to perform pragmatic functions.

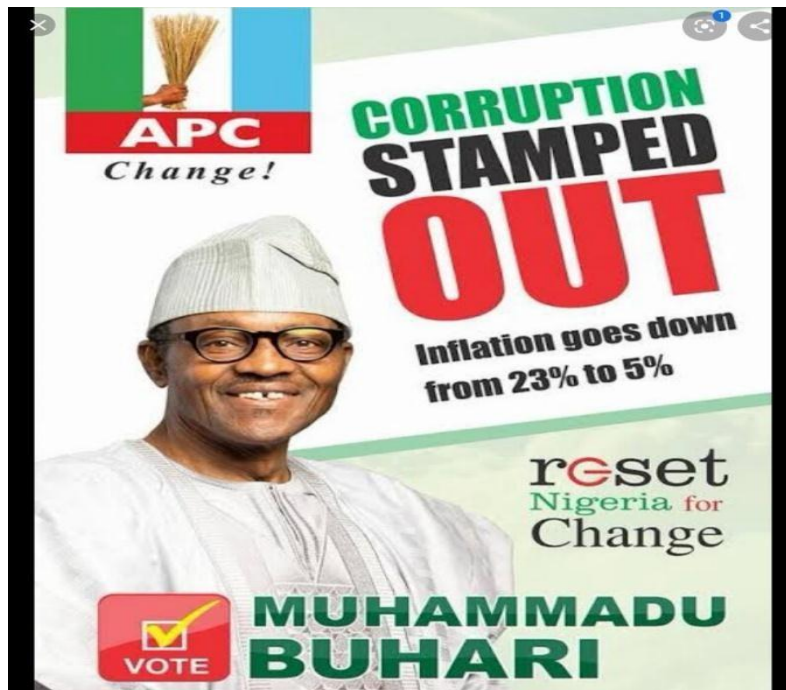


Data Transcript: HERE COMES THE ONLY SAVIOUR FOR NIGERIA, GEN. MUHAMMADU BUHARI.

Table 2: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 1b

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The theme is a presentation of the presidential candidate	This is indicated with demonstrative structure— a deictic expression, which introduces the sentence, <i>HERE</i>	i. Deictic Expression/ Adverbial Group: <i>HERE COMES</i> ii. Hyperbole: <i>HERE COMES THE ONLY SAVIOUR FOR NIGERIA</i> iii. Apposition: <i>GEN. MUHAMMADU BUHARI</i>

The deictic expression in the adverbial group structure is used in the poster to create a sense of imagination in the minds of the electorates. The hyperbole is used to amuse the electorate and at the same time trigger specific reactions in them. More importantly, the idea behind the use of hyperbole is to divert the electorates attention to the presidential candidate, by giving the candidate a special form of visibility. The appositive statement serves as a means of creating emphasis.



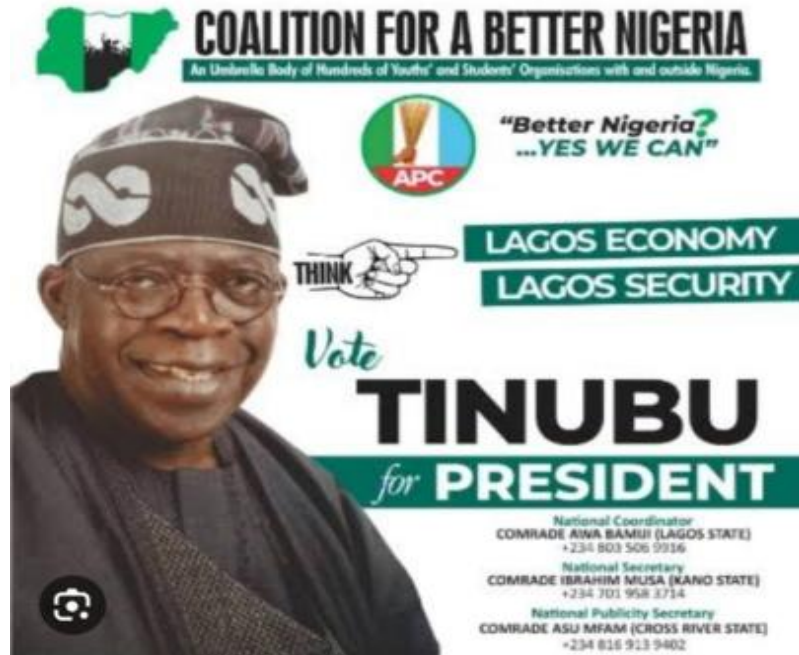
Data Transcript: CORRUPTION STAMPED OUT, Inflation goes down from 23% to 5%—
 reset Nigeria for Change, Vote MUHAMMADU BUHARI

Table 3: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 1c

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The subject matter is a statement of agenda	This is portrayed through the use of short affirmative sentences with varying structural composition.	i. Parallelism: <i>CORRUPTION STAMPED OUT, Inflation goes down from 23% to 5%</i> ii. Hyperbole: <i>Inflation goes down from 23% to 5%</i> iii. Personification: <i>CORRUPTION STAMPED OUT</i> iv. Imperative sentence: <i>Vote MUHAMMADU BUHARI</i>

In the poster above, the framing techniques, constituting the parallel Subject + verb + Adjunct (SVA) sentence structure, hyperbole and personification are means of stirring the emotion of the electorates, making indirect request through negotiation. By negotiation, the poster illustrates previous achievements of the presidential aspirant using analogy and a parallel sentence structure before making a request to the electorates to support the candidature of the presidential aspirant.

Sample 2: 2023 APC Presidential Election



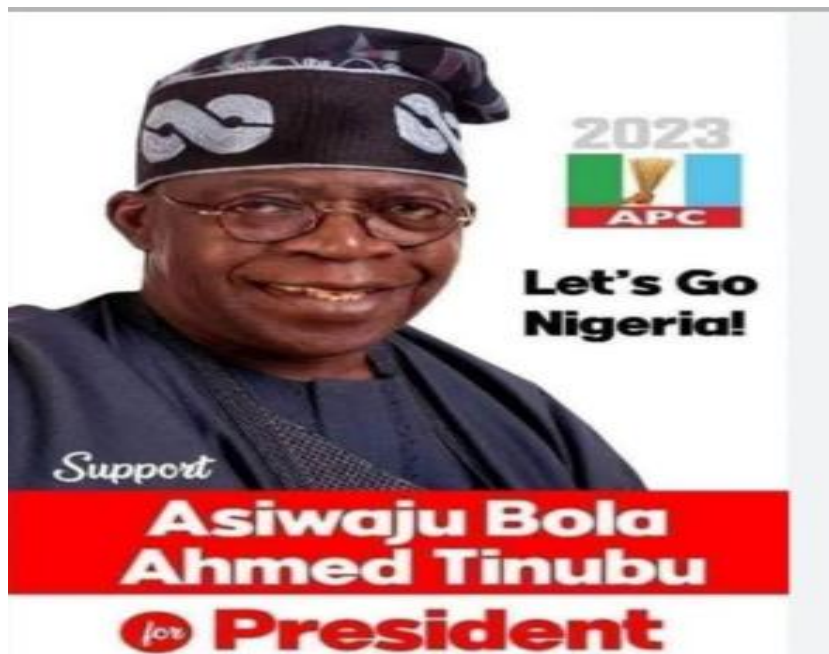
Data Transcript: “Better Nigeria? ... YES WE CAN”, Think LAGOS ECONOMY, LAGOS SECURITY; Vote TINUBU FOR PRESIDENT

Table 4: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 2a

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The poster illustrates the affirmation of hope; and persuasion	The linguistic indicators of the theme of the poster include the use of both affirmative statement and declarative sentence.	i. Question and Answer: <i>Better Nigeria? ... YES WE CAN</i> ii. Performative verb: <i>Think</i> iii. Parallelism and allusion: <i>Think LAGOS ECONOMY, LAGOS SECURITY</i> iv. Imperative statement: <i>Vote TINUBU for PRESIDENT</i> v. Capitalisation of word and structures/

		<p>Personal and Spatial Deixis: <i>TINUBU & PRESIDENT, LAGOS ECONOMY, LAGOS SECURITY, YES WE CAN</i></p>
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The framing strategies highlighted in the tabular presentation of the linguistic features of the poster above illustrate an effort to create a sense of responsibility in the electorates on one hand, and the persuasion of the electorates on the other hand to demonstrate their right to franchise in favour of the presidential candidate in the poster. The essence of allusion in the data is to appeal to the reasoning faculty of the electorates. This is further demonstrated through the choice of the performative verb, “*Think*”. Capitalisation is used to aid the electorates’ memorability. This is also the case with the use of the personal deixis. However, the capitalisation of “*YES WE CAN*” is meant to give the electorates a sense of assurance and strength.

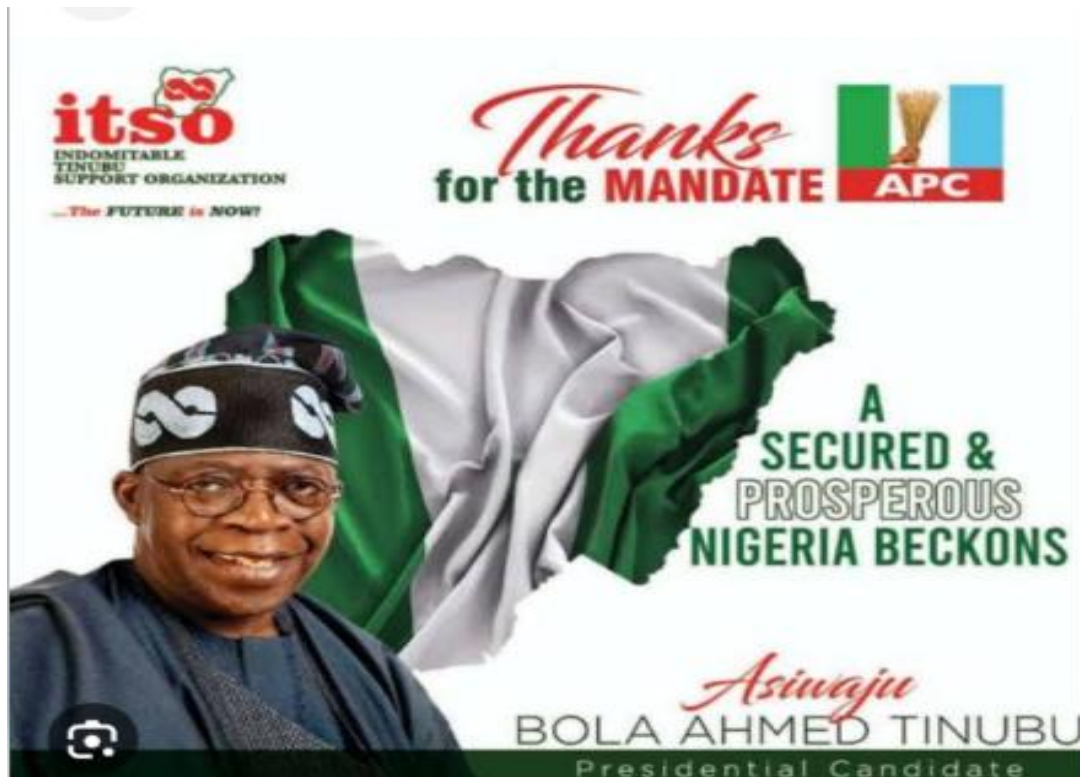


Data Transcript: Let’s Go Nigeria! *Support for* President.

Table 5: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 2b

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The poster illustrates a call for political participation, an exercise of the electorates' right of franchise; and an appeal to vote for the presidential candidate	The theme of persuasion is indicated through the choice of imperative statements.	I. Contraction: Let's ii. Imperatives: <i>Better Nigeria? ... YES WE CAN</i> " ii. Personal deixis: <i>Nigeria, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu & President</i> iv. Performative verbs: <i>GO & Support</i>

In the poster under consideration, the use of contraction (let's) is deployed to implant the sense of togetherness and inclusion. The use of imperative expression recurs, likewise is the use of personal deixis illustrative of name calling. The essence of this linguistic choice is to invoke the reaction of the electorate, to lure them to act in a particular way. Instead of an outright appeal, imperatives are used as a strategy to stir the emotions of the electorates. Also, deictic expressions such as name calling are used to achieve emphasis of purpose. The performative verbs used are urge electorate to be up and running towards ensuring victory of the candidate in the election. This implies that what is required by the candidate from the electorates transcends mere support as physical action is equally required.



Data Transcript: Thanks for the MANDATE

...The FUTURE is NOW.

A SECURED & PROSPEROUS NIGERIA BECKONS ASIWAJU BOLA AHMED TINUBU.

Table 6: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 2c

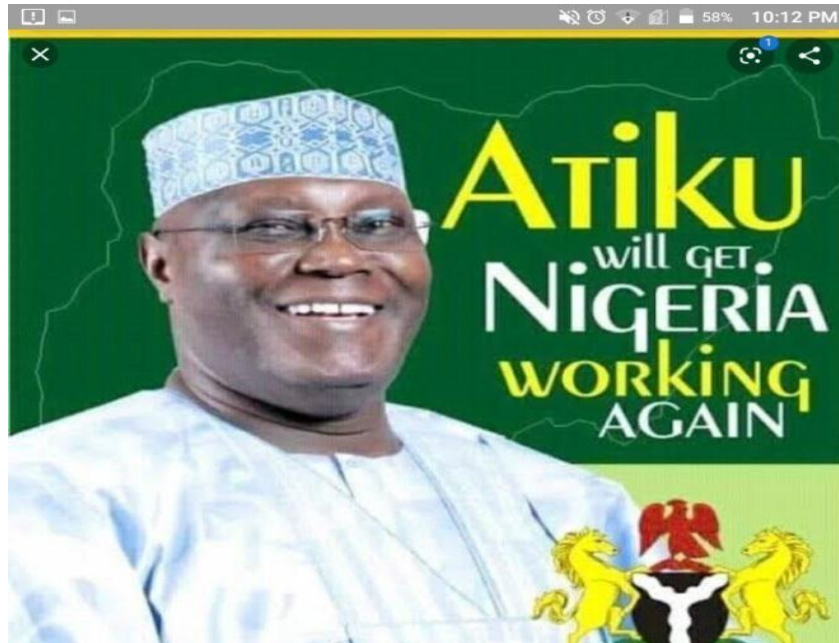
Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The thematic preoccupation of the poster is indicative of appreciation and statement	The linguistic indicator of the statement of agenda is analogy	i. Paradox: ... <i>The FUTURE is NOW</i> ii. Antonymy: <i>FUTURE & NOW</i> iii. Analogical Creation: <i>the second and third sentences illustrate analogy.</i> iv. Personification: <i>A SECURED & PROSPEROUS NIGERIA BECKONS</i>

of agenda.		<p><i>ASIWAJU BOLA AHMED TINUBU</i></p> <p>ii. Personal deixis: <i>Nigeria & Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu</i></p> <p>iii Attributive Adjectives: <i>SECURED & PROSPEROUS</i></p>
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In the poster, varying framing techniques abound as indicated above. For instance, the use of paradox, analogy, and attributive adjectives are to create mental images in the minds of the electorates. All of these are strategic means of appealing to the electorates to exercise their franchise and vote for the candidate in the poster. Personal deixis is used in the poster to emphasise the context of the text and the thematic *subject* of the poster, the presidential candidate. Not only this, but the use of attributive adjectives also illustrates a statement of the political agenda of the party towards the promotion of national security “*Secured*” and socio-economic development “*Prosperous*”. The pragmatic import of the above datum indicates that a secured and prosperous Nigeria is lacking and the candidate has the capacity to make the country secured and prosperous as the hope of a better nation beckons.

Datum 2: PDP Posters

Sample 3: 2019 Presidential Election



Data Transcript: ATiKu will GET NIGERIA WORKiNG AGAIN

Table 7: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 3a

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The theme of the poster above is the endorsement of the candidature of the presidential aspirant	This is presented with an assertive statement.	i. <i>Naming/Thematic Subject:</i> Atiku which is the name of the presidential candidate is stated emphatically. ii. <i>Affirmation:</i> Atiku will get Nigeria working again iii. <i>Polysemy:</i> working, Among the possible meanings of working: <i>functioning, performing, and others.</i>

The framing strategies that abound in the poster above as illustrated on the table which include naming and affirmation are used for emphatic purpose, to generate reactions from the electorates and stir their emotion. It is also used to create a visibility for the aspirant. The choice of “working” is meant to generate after thoughts in the minds of the electorates, to raise some questions in their minds. This word is also used to persuade the electorates i.e. to raise their expectation of the candidate’s ambition when voted in. Polysemy refers to words that have multiple meanings. Therefore, “working” as used in the above datum could mean functioning, performing, etc. again. This implies that only the candidate has the required temerity to fix the socio-economic challenges the Nigerian nation is faced with.

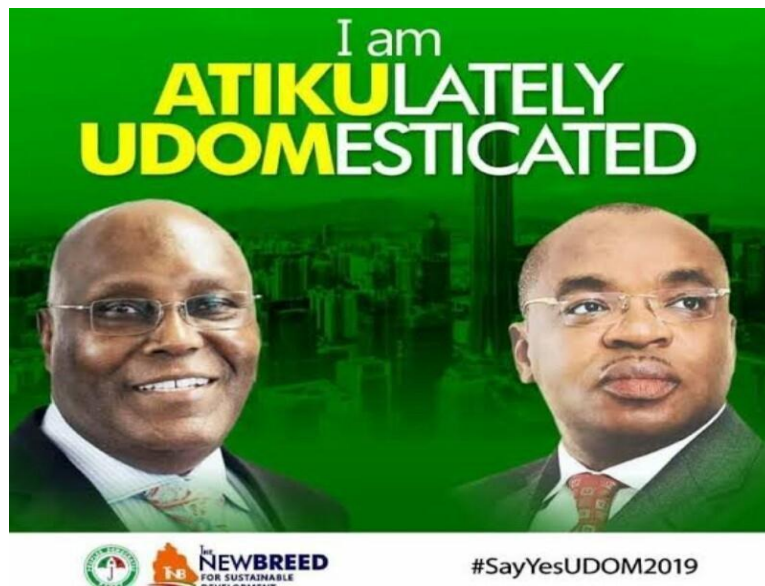


Data Transcript: Atiku-Obi “19 REFORM, UNITY, COMPETENCE, VISION, PEACE & PROSPERITY, #ATIKUOBI2019

Table 8: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 3b

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The topic of the poster are statements of declaration and agenda	This is indicated using abstract nouns of positive denotation.	i. Naming: <i>Atiku-Obi</i> ii. Contextual Synonyms: <i>REFORM, UNITY, COMPETENCE, PEACE & PROSPERITY</i> iii. Text and Figure Mix: <i>Atiku-Obi '19</i>

Table 8 presents the agenda setting techniques used in the poster above. The presidential aspirants' names are conjoined to constitute a new word and this name is presented as the first item on the poster. This is meant to achieve emphasis and memorability. The choice of contextual synonyms for the statement of the political agenda of the aspirants is meant to create mental images in the minds of the electorates. The use of text and figure mix in the poster is to enhance time and space management.



Data Transcript: I am ARTICULATELY UDOMESTICATED

Table 9: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 3c

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The topic of the poster is statement of intention/ interest pledging allegiance and solidarity	This is achieved using pun..	i. Declarative statement: <i>I am ATIKULATELY UDOMESTICATED.</i> ii. Pun: <i>ARTICULATELY UDOMESTICATED</i>

In the tabular presentation of the agenda setting techniques in the political poster above, the framing techniques include the use of declarative sentence. Even though a declaration, the embedded meanings behind the linguistic choices are encapsulated in the pun, *ATIKULATELY UDOMESTICATED*. The words, ‘articulate and domesticate are the root for the adverbial group which contextually mean ‘proficiency’ and ‘adaptation’. This is a means of stating the aspirants’ motive and candidature in the first instance *atikulate*, and a manner of creating a sense of solidarity with the electorates in the second instance— *UDOMESTICATED*. This is the candidates’ statement of their loyalty to their nation and its development when voted in. by and large, the use of pun is meant to stir the emotion of the electorates.

Dissecting the lexis items in this morphological creativity, Atiku, the name of the PDP candidate is morphologically transformed to “ATIKULATELY” which means having the ability of expressing or able to do things easily and clearly. This implies that the candidate understands the challenges facing Nigeria and he has the mental and physical capability to fix them. “UDOMESTICATED” also as morphological ingenuity refers to the Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Udom Emanuel, whose picture appears along side that of Atiku Abubakar. The pragmatic import of UDOMESTICATED is to show the extent to which the governor is popular in his state. Udom domesticated Akwa Ibom, hence, the morphological variant; UDOMESTICATED. So, while Atiku understands Nigerian challenges and has the capacity to address them, he has total support of the people of Akwa Ibom state which has been domesticated by Udom Emmanuel.

Sample 2: 2023 PDP Presidential Election



Data Transcript: AS ONE, WE CAN GET IT DONE— VOTE ATIKU ABUBAKAR THE PDP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Table 10: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 4a

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The topic of the poster is statement of appeal to the electorates.	The theme of the poster is achieved using analogy.	i. Analogy: <i>AS ONE, WE CAN GET IT DONE</i> ii. Imperative statement: <i>VOTE ATIKU ABUBAKAR THE PDP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.</i> ii. Performative Verb: <i>VOTE</i> iii. Apposition: <i>ATIKU ABUBAKAR, THE PDP</i>

		<i>PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE</i>
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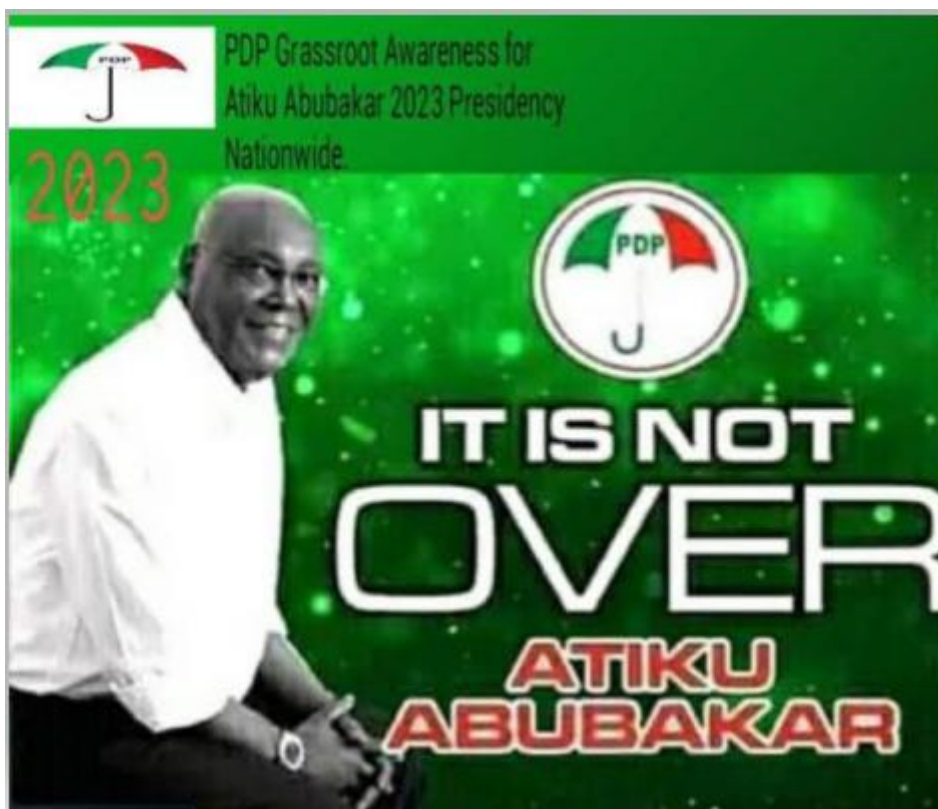
On the table above, the “we” as a pronominal is deployed to ensure all-inclusiveness in the project of the candidate. The framing strategies of analogy as well as the imperative sentence are means of persuading the electorates to cast their votes for the aspirant on the poster. However, the use of apposition is to enhance the memorability of the electorates. This is to ensure that the electorates take note of the party and the candidate they are to cast their votes for.



Data Transcript: VISION 2023 INSHA ALLAH, ATIKU ABUBAKAR FOR PRESIDENT

Table 11: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 4b

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The topic of the poster is	The linguistic indicator of the	i. Declarative Statement: <i>VISION 2023 INSHA ALLAH, ATIKU ABUBAKAR FOR PRESIDENT</i>



Data Transcript: IT IS NOT OVER, ATIKU ABAUBAKAR

Table 12: An Analysis of the Agenda Setting Techniques in Sample 4c

Object	Indicator	Framing Techniques
The topic of the poster is the statement of intent by the candidate.	The theme of the poster is expressed using declarative statement.	i. Declarative Statement: <i>IT IS NOT OVER</i> ii. Naming/ Personal Deixis: <i>ATIKU ABUBAKAR</i>

The tabular analysis of the Agenda Setting techniques in the data sample above reflects the statement of the presidential aspirant's intent to run for the office in the election year emphasised on the poster. This is further established using declarative sentence: *IT IS NOT OVER* and the personal deixis: *ATIKU ABUBAKAR*. However, the declarative sentence could be interpreted in

diverse context as it poses the question, *What is not over?* Hence, the essence of the use of this declarative in the poster is *to* leave specific questions in the mind of the readers, the electorates.

Discussion of Findings

At the preliminary section of this study, the aim of this study which is to examine selected campaign posters of the two major Nigerian political parties from a pragmatic point of view with a view to investigate how the print media contribute to meaning explication in political discourses was emphasised. From the analysis of the selected campaign posters based on the tenets of McCombs and Shaw (1972) Agenda Setting Theory, it has been found that:

i. The objects of political campaign posters include introduction of political aspirants/candidates, creating awareness, providing the electorates with the background information on political aspirants and statement of agenda.

ii. The framing techniques used in campaign posters include:

a. declarative statements are means of stating the agenda of the aspirants as politicians or contestants in elections often employ this communicative pattern to emphasis their readiness to address all societal challenges. In other words, the dominant use of declarative statement in the data of this choice is a deliberate and well-calculated attempt to create a sense of ensuring societal growth and development.

b. pun, and hyperbole serve as means of stirring the emotion of the electorates as they make them see capacity for accomplishment of politicians beyond ordinary scope of human reasoning. This is to create a sense of greater hope and trust in the contestants and further market endear them to the hearts of the electorate.

c. collocation serves as a means of creating linguistic familiarity and memorability of the content of the selected campaign posters. In addition, it enhances the musicality potentials of the content of the data analysed.

d. text and figure-mix ensure time and space management as well as a unique linguistic features to enhance potentials for memorability.

e. naming and deitic expressions are deployed as a means of creating awareness and heightened the emphasis/seriousness of the concerned politicians.

f. apposition serve as means of achieving emphasis and clarity. In addition, it ensures memorability and sometimes the musicality effect of the analysed data.

Conclusion

So far in this study, the deployment of the tenets of the theory of agenda setting for the examination of selected campaign posters does not only reflect the images of potential candidates. It also reveals that campaign posters are means of appealing the electorates through persuasive methods and through the deployment of specific linguistic features such as statement of agenda/manifesto, pun, hyperbole, etc. to create good impression in the minds of the electorates. The combination of these linguistic features makes the language of politics in general and campaign posters in particular unique in all ramifications and it is believed that the linguistic features of this pattern of language use goes some ways in achieving the aim of politicians who are poised towards persuading the electorate to achieve their electoral desires of winning election and forming government.

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