

**Discourse of Politics and Politicking with Politeness in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's  
National Broadcast on Oil Subsidy Removal**

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**Abstract**

This study explored President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's broadcast on subsidy removal to examine how politeness principles were deployed in politicking the politics of subsidy removal in the Nigerian reality of heated polity. Using Leech's brand of Politeness Principle in analysing the qualitatively obtained data, the study projected subsidy removal as a policy roadmap for national recovery and the well-being of the populace. Tinubu, as a political leader, employs linguistic resources and discursive strategies to project his ideology, manage public perception, and foster constructive dialogue. By analyzing selected presidential broadcasts through politeness theory, this research aims to uncover the forms, structures, and functions of politeness strategies used by Tinubu. The findings highlight the role of politeness strategies in navigating political communication, emphasizing their importance in maintaining a balance between assertiveness and diplomacy. The study also reveals how these strategies contribute to self-profiling and ideological promotion within the complex socio-political landscape of Nigeria. The analysis provides insights into the pragmatic functions of politeness strategies and their implications for political discourse, offering a panoramic understanding of language use in leadership and governance. The concept of politeness in communication is, therefore, revealed particularly within the realm of political discourse. Politeness, defined as a polite social behaviour within a specific culture, is crucial for fostering comfortable and enduring social relationships. In the context of political communication, the strategic use of politeness becomes a vital tool for leaders as they navigate varied sensitive issues, oil subsidy removal for instance.

**Key Words:** Communication, politeness, political discourse, presidential broadcasts, Subsidy removal

## **Introduction**

At this onset of the second quarter of the twenty-first millennium when political discourse has reached its peak, and communication, with all its complexities, has remained the important and most potent weapon or instrument, the artful use of politeness strategies becomes a cornerstone for successful engagement (McDowell, et. Al., 2017). This multifaceted landscape underscores the significance of skillfully applying politeness strategies, offering a pathway to foster constructive dialogue, build bridges of understanding, and instil trust among diverse constituents. The political realm, obviously, demands a delicate equilibrium between assertiveness and diplomacy (Yuan, 2023), the leaders must navigate through a mosaic of perspectives. The utilization of politeness strategies becomes more than a rhetorical tool (Adel *et al*, 2016); it transforms into a key facilitator for leaders seeking resonance and connection with the varied fabric of their audience (Ruthven, 2021). In precise terms, politeness strategies become more than a mere tool, they evolve into a nuanced approach essential for leaders aiming to traverse the intricate terrain of public sentiment (Liu *et al*, 2017). The ability to connect with diverse audiences and address sensitive topics with finesse not only defines effective leadership but also sets the stage for fostering a climate of open dialogue and mutual understanding. The bottom line, therefore, is to contemplate a study that projects how language users, as text producers, rely on certain linguistic resources as discursive tools or strategies with an ideological underpinning in their contributions to nation-building enterprises. Specifically, then, what is to be looked out for in the current research engagement is how President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT) navigated through certain sociopolitical mines using language – all according to Oduola (2021), emphasizing communication as one major and vital trait in human life, and most basic characteristics of the homo-sapience. Such linguistic manoeuvrings for communicative navigation are to be examined in PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal, using the politeness approach. The removal of oil subsidies in Nigeria has been a contentious issue, significantly impacting the socio-economic landscape. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's national broadcast addressing this policy shift is an exemplary case for analyzing the use of politeness as a discursive strategy. This study explores the linguistic features of politeness in the broadcast and how they function to frame the government's narrative. The crux of this research engagement goes with Renkema's (1993, p.8) point that “a strategy called

politeness is required to not only make a conversation run smoothly”, but also to maintain social relationships and personal behaviours (Wardhaugh, 1977, p.7).

Language also can be used as a tool to maintain social relationship and personal behaviours.

### **Statement of the problem**

Several scholars in the field of English linguistics have examined speeches with various subject matters from the rather narrow text-linguistic perspectives that advertently or inadvertently ignored or sparsely considered the socio-political relevance of various discursive strategies. Besides, Bola Ahmed Tinubu (BAT), as President, appears to have brought some novelty and freshness to broadcasts as responses to front-burner national issues (Osisanwo, 2017; Osisanwo and Adeyemo, 2024; Ekwueme, 2013; Adedun and Atolagbe, 2011). Examining such speeches and broadcasts in pragmatic terms, using politeness principles as a matter of interest, therefore, remains an important gap. In the attempt to unearth and investigate the inherent significance of speeches as an accomplished art, having its origin from the classical period, several academic efforts have been made to analyze and bring out the relevance of and contributions of notable people in the society towards the actualization and development of the country. In this wise, different speeches and letters have been analyzed using different linguistic resources and tools to assess their power and worth. Ekwueme (2013), for instance, faintly examined the discourse strategies and ideology in selected open discourse of former President Olusegun Obasanjo using the socio-cognitive mode of Vän Dijk (1993, 2006a, 2006b) to identify the use of language by discourse marker. Adedun and Atolagbe (2011) expose the underpinning ideologies through a discourse analysis of President Olusegun Obasanjo's farewell to the Nigerian parliament. Balogun. K (2009) worked on the Pragmatic Analysis of inaugural addresses by selected Southwestern Governors in Nigeria while Ayodabo (2003) discusses the pragma-stylistic study of M K.O Abiola's historic speech of June 24, 1993. Odebunmi (2020) examines messages by images: Visual semiotic and digital storytelling in Endsars protest Facebook images in the context of the Nigerian political complications. It is, therefore, hoped that this pragmatic investigation of political text production would help in unearthing PBAT's ideology construction strategies with politeness as an instance of 'using words to do things'

This study explores the linguistic features of politeness in the broadcast and how they function to frame the government's narrative.

### **Aim and objectives**

This research aims to investigate the use of linguistic elements that culminate into politeness strategies in political communication, with a focus on PBAT's engagement with sensitive issues of economic hardship. In other words, exploring the linguistic features of politeness in the broadcast and how they function particularly within the context of the intricate economic landscape orchestrated by the politics of subsidy removal in Nigeria becomes necessary. The specific objectives, therefore, are to:

- i. Identify forms and structures of politeness strategies in PBAT's choices in selected excerpts from PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal;
- ii. Categorize linguistic resources that constitute politeness strategies in selected excerpts from PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal;
- iii. Examine the discursive function of elements of politeness and forms of politeness as actionable expressions in selected excerpts from PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal;
- iv. Discuss the functionally packaged ideological loads in politeness strategies in selected excerpts from PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal.

The main thrust of the foregoing is finding the probing question that can assist in examining linguistically verbalized conventional discourse instruments as navigating strategies. It is pertinent to know that an investigation into this field of pragmatics with emphasis on politeness strategies is meant to probe into how the text producer deploys his linguistic resources such as structures and syntactic manipulation of choices to convince his text consumers. In the overall analysis, the study can provide a unique insight into how linguistics choices are made by PBAT in doing his nation-building business.

## **Politeness and the pragmatics of classroom interaction**

The study titled *Leech's Politeness Principle Used by Teachers in English Language Teaching* by Dwi Santoso, et. Al., (2021) offers a thorough exploration of how teachers utilize Leech's politeness principles in the context of English language teaching. The study's primary aim is to investigate the types and forms of politeness principles applied by teachers, an important topic in the realm of education given that politeness plays a crucial role in effective communication and in maintaining classroom harmony.

One of the key strengths of this study is its clear objective. The research is focused on identifying and analyzing how teachers implement Leech's politeness principles, such as tact, generosity, and approbation, in their interactions with students. This is a highly relevant topic, as politeness is central to fostering positive communication within the classroom environment. By identifying nine types of politeness principles, the study demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of Leech's theory and how it can be applied in educational settings.

Another strength of the study is its structured analysis. The researchers employ a descriptive method to analyze the various forms of politeness used by teachers, which helps in presenting the findings in a clear and organized manner. This approach allows for a more understandable representation of the data, making it accessible to educators interested in improving their communication skills. Furthermore, the practical implications of the study are noteworthy. The findings provide useful insights for teachers who wish to enhance their interactions with students by incorporating different forms of politeness. Additionally, the research contributes to a broader understanding of classroom discourse, especially in terms of the social and cultural dynamics that exist between teachers and students.

Despite these strengths, there are several areas where the study could be improved. One notable limitation is the lack of contextual details regarding the classroom settings in which the data was collected. The study does not provide much information about factors such as the age of students, their cultural backgrounds, or the specific type of classroom environment. These factors can significantly influence the way politeness principles are applied, and a more detailed discussion of the context could enhance the interpretation and generalization of the results.

Another area for improvement is the study's sample size and diversity. While the research mentions using the documentation technique for data collection, it does not elaborate on the sample size or the range of teachers and classrooms involved. This lack of information limits the study's ability to draw broad conclusions. Including details about the diversity of classrooms and teachers involved would help strengthen the generalizability of the findings and offer a more representative picture of how Leech's politeness principles are applied across different contexts.

Additionally, although the study identifies various types and forms of politeness, it could benefit from a deeper exploration of how teachers consciously choose which politeness maxim to apply in particular teaching situations. More concrete examples or case studies could provide a clearer understanding of how these principles are practically implemented in everyday teaching. Such an addition would make the findings more relatable and actionable for teachers, providing them with tangible strategies for improving their classroom communication.

Finally, while the study aims to determine the most frequently used politeness principles, it does not provide a detailed quantitative analysis or a comparative study of the frequency with which each principle is applied. Including frequency counts or comparative data would offer a clearer picture of which politeness principles dominate in teacher-student interactions. This additional analysis would further enhance the clarity of the findings and provide a more nuanced understanding of how politeness operates in the classroom.

In conclusion, the study offers valuable insights into the use of Leech's politeness principles in English language teaching. It provides a clear framework for understanding the role of politeness in teacher-student interactions and emphasizes its importance for effective communication. However, expanding on contextual details, offering concrete examples, and including more detailed quantitative analysis would further enhance the depth and applicability of the study. These additions could make the research more relevant and useful for teachers seeking to improve their communication strategies in real-world classroom settings.

### **Theoretical considerations**

Various theoretical options exist in exploring the structural and syntactic manipulation of choices used by PBAT to convince speech-text consumers in his national broadcast of controversial policy

shifts, employing various discursive strategies to communicate effectively with the public. The present study, however, focuses on the application of Geoffrey Leech's politeness principle, which emphasizes the importance of social harmony and the mitigation of face threats in communication. Leech's (1983) politeness principle outlines several maxims, including:

- (i) the tact maxim,
- (ii) generosity maxim,
- (iii) approbation maxim,
- (iv) modesty maxim,
- (v) agreement maxim
- (vi) sympathy maxim.

These maxims help to navigate social interactions and maintain relationships. In political discourse, where public sentiment is critical, these strategies can effectively manage potential backlash and foster support. This theoretical choice is based on the following reasons:

- (1) Leech's politeness principle is primarily concerned with social harmony and face management within communication. He emphasizes a set of maxims designed to facilitate polite interactions and minimize social friction. His framework is, therefore, more focused on the pragmatic aspects of language use in social contexts.
- (2) Leech's politeness principle adopts maximization and minimization by his six maxims to facilitate polite interaction management as follows:
  - (i) Minimize the imposition on others.
  - (ii) Maximize the benefits to others while minimizing self-benefit.
  - (iii) Maximize praise and minimize dispraise of others.
  - (iv) Minimize praise of self.
  - (v) Maximize agreement between speakers.

- (vi) Maximize sympathy and minimize antipathy.
- (3) Leech's theory emphasizes the maximization of social harmony and the panorama of politeness in various contexts. It considers the balance of benefits and costs in social exchanges.
- (4) Leech's maxims can apply broadly to various forms of communication, including written and spoken discourse. They are particularly relevant in understanding politeness in everyday social interactions.
- (5) Leech acknowledges the role of culture but does not focus extensively on cultural variations. His maxims are designed to be applicable across different cultures while emphasizing universal aspects of politeness.

This uniqueness maximizing social harmony through specific maxims, and their deployment as strategies in PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal, using linguistic elements, call for a study that can enrich our understanding of politeness as a crucial element of social interaction. Our analysis must, therefore, pursue the veracity of Yule's (1996, p.60) position that "politeness is a polite social behaviour in a particular culture".

### **Methodology**

This study aims to conduct a qualitative analysis of President Tinubu's broadcast, focusing on specific excerpts that highlight the use of Leech's politeness maxims. The analysis looks for linguistic markers that embody these strategies, such as indirectness, inclusive language, and expressions of empathy. The 'qualitativeness' of the study, therefore, calls for Critical Discourse Analysis that examines how language in PBAT's broadcast shapes and reflects the Nigerian social dynamics and power relations. In the process, the analysis shall follow a structured methodological pattern to allow for a comprehensive textual analysis of politeness as a discursive strategy, helping to reveal how President Tinubu navigates a sensitive political issue through language.

### **Segment Analysis**

The broadcast, expectedly, shall be divided into sections or such key points as 'introduction', 'rationale for subsidy removal', 'potential impacts', 'government measures', and 'conclusion'.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

Our analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's national broadcast on oil subsidy removal necessitates the need to consider how politeness strategies pragmatically function within discourse, especially in politically sensitive contexts.

### **PARAGRAPH ONE**

Tinubu begins his broadcast with a clear intent to address economic issues, employing the politeness principle of *tact*. His opening statement is designed to set the stage for a comprehensive discussion about the state of the economy and his proposed solutions. Tinubu shows his commitment to transparency and clarity by stating his aim to ensure that the public is well-informed. This approach helps to foster trust and allows the audience to anticipate a detailed and accessible explanation of his policies. Also, by framing his intent in a straightforward manner, he establishes a cooperative tone, inviting the audience to engage with his message critically:

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
I want to talk to you about 'our' economy.	Declarative: Inclusive Language	Informative / minimizing	High Tact Maxim
It is important that you understand the reasons for the policy measures I have taken.	Declarative: Inclusive Language	Justification/ Explanatory	Tact Maxim

Going by the contextual background, the removal of oil subsidies is a controversial and potentially unpopular decision. Thus, Tinubu's speech has, as a rule, navigated the complexities of public sentiment while aiming to garner support for necessary economic reforms.

## PARAGRAPH TWO

In this paragraph, Tinubu focuses on the principle of *clarity* by pledging to use simple, jargon-free language. His commitment to avoiding technical terms is a deliberate strategy to make his message more accessible to a diverse audience. This is in line with the politeness principle of *tact, modesty, generosity and agreement* as it seeks to reduce the potential for misunderstanding and confusion. Emphasizing his intent to communicate in plain language, Tinubu aims to reach not only policy experts but also the general public, ensuring that his economic plans are understood by everyone. This approach echoes his dedication to inclusivity and effective communication.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
I am not going to talk in difficult terms by dwelling on economic jargon and concepts.	Declarative	Assurance/ minimizing praise of self	Modesty maxim High
I will speak in plain, clear language so that you know where I stand.	Declarative	Assurance / maximizing benefit to others	Generosity maxim High
More importantly, so that you see and hopefully will share my vision regarding the journey to a better economy.	Declarative	Persuasive/Explanatory  Maximizing agreement between self and others	Agreement High

**PARAGRAPH THREE**

In this part, Tinubu justifies the removal of the fuel subsidy by outlining its adverse economic effects. This explanation employs the *generosity, agreement and sympathy* politeness principles by acknowledging potential public concerns and providing a rationale for the decision. Tinubu frames the subsidy as a measure that had become financially unsustainable and inefficient. Through addressing the subsidy’s negative impact and justifying its removal, he seeks to mitigate potential criticism and align his actions with a broader vision of economic reform. This approach mirrors his consideration of the public’s economic well-being and his commitment to addressing structural issues.

Sentences	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
For several years, I have consistently maintained the position that the fuel subsidy had to go.	Declarative	Justification/ Explanatory/ maximise agreement between self and Nigerians	Agreement High
This once beneficial measure had outlived its usefulness.	Declarative	Acknowledgement/ Justification/ maximise the benefit to Nigerians	Generosity low
The subsidy cost ‘us’ trillions of Naira yearly	Declarative inclusive language	Informative	Sympathy maxim High

Such a vast sum of money would have been better spent on public transportation, healthcare, schools, housing and even national security.	Declarative	Justification/ maximise benefit to Nigerians	Generosity maxim High
Instead, it was being funnelled into the deep pockets and lavish bank accounts of a select group of individuals.	Declarative	Critical/ minimize the cost to Nigerians	Tact maxim low

#### **PARAGRAPH FOUR**

In this segment, Tinubu criticizes the influential group that benefited from the fuel subsidy, illustrating a direct approach to addressing economic injustices. This critical stance reflects the *criticism* principle, aiming to highlight the unfair advantages enjoyed by a select few at the expense of the broader public. Drawing attention to the negative consequences of the subsidy for economic equity and democratic governance, Tinubu seeks to build a case for his reform agenda. This approach not only underscores the need for change but also aims to galvanize public support for his policies by framing them as necessary for achieving greater fairness.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
This group had amassed so much	Declarative	Critical/ maximise agreement between	Agreement/ sympathy Moderate

wealth and power that they became a serious threat to the fairness of our economy and the integrity of our democratic governance.		self and Nigerians/ maximise sympathy between self and Nigerians	
To be blunt, Nigeria could never become the society it was intended to be as long as such small, powerful yet unelected groups hold enormous influence over our political economy and the institutions that govern it.	Declarative	Critical/Explanatory/ maximise agreement between self and Nigerians/ maximise sympathy between self and Nigerians	Agreement/ sympathy Moderate

**PARAGRAPH FIVE**

Tinubu asserts that the public’s needs should outweigh the influence of a wealthy minority, reflecting the *tact* and *approbation* principles. By emphasizing the democratic principle that the majority's needs should be prioritized over the interests of the elite, he ties his message with democratic values. This approach echoes his commitment to ensuring that policy decisions reflect the aspirations and needs of the broader populace rather than being swayed by powerful interests. Reinforcing the importance of democratic principles, Tinubu seeks to strengthen public support for his economic reforms.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
The whims of the few should never hold dominant sway over the hopes and aspirations of the many.	Declarative	Persuasive/Informative	Tact maxim High
If we are to be a democracy, the people and not the power of money must be sovereign.	Declarative/ inclusive language/ conditional statement	Persuasive/Informative  Minimize dispraise of Nigerians	Approbation maxim High

### PARAGRAPH SIX

Acknowledging that the previous administration also recognized the need to address the subsidy issue, Tinubu places his actions within a broader context of ongoing reform efforts. This approach reflects the *approbation* and *modesty politeness* principles, as it shares credit and responsibility for addressing the issue. Connecting his policies with prior recognition of the problem, Tinubu demonstrates continuity and builds credibility. This strategy helps to frame his actions as part of a larger, collaborative effort to address economic challenges, thereby reinforcing his legitimacy as a reform-oriented leader.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
The preceding administration saw	Declarative	Informative/ minimize dispraise of	Approbation maxim High

<p>this looming danger as well.</p>		<p>the preceding administration</p>	
<p>Indeed, it made no provision in the 2023 Appropriations for subsidy after June this year.</p>	<p>Declarative</p>	<p>Informative/ minimize praise of self</p>	<p>Modesty maxim High</p>
<p>Removal of this once helpful device that had transformed into a millstone around the country's neck had become inevitable.</p>	<p>Declarative</p>	<p>Justification</p>	<p>High</p>

With this maxim the President acknowledges the efforts of previous administrations, highlighting the challenges faced by the nation. By doing so, he minimizes the dispraise of his predecessors and creates a more collaborative atmosphere. This can help in unifying public sentiment rather than creating division

**PARAGRAPH SEVEN**

In this paragraph, Tinubu critiques the multiple exchange rate system, highlighting its role in enabling currency speculation and economic distortions. This analysis employs the *criticism* principle, presenting a formal critique of the existing system's inefficiencies. Pointing out the negative impacts of the exchange rate system on the economy, Tinubu aims to justify his proposed reforms and build support for policy changes. This approach not only addresses specific economic issues but also seeks to synchronize public opinion with his proposed solutions.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
Also, the multiple exchange rate system that had been established became nothing but a highway of currency speculation.	Declarative	Critical	Moderate
It diverted money that should have been used to create jobs, build factories and businesses for millions of people.	Declarative	Informative/Critical	Moderate
Our national wealth was doled on favourable terms to a handful of people who have been made filthy rich simply by moving money from one hand to another.	Declarative	Critical	Moderate
This too was extremely unfair.	Declarative	Critical	Moderate

**PARAGRAPH EIGHT**

**Analysis:**

Tinubu addresses the broader implications of illicit wealth accumulation on democracy and the economy. This discussion reflects the *criticism* principle while maintaining a formal tone. Outlining the detrimental effects of wealth concentration and corruption, Tinubu contextualizes his economic reforms within a larger framework of addressing systemic issues. This approach aims to reflect the importance of reform not just for economic stability but also for preserving democratic integrity. By addressing these threats directly, Tinubu seeks to build support for his policies and emphasize the need for comprehensive reform.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
It also compounded the threat that the illicit and mass accumulation of money posed to the future of our democratic system and its economy.	Declarative	Critical	Moderate

**PARAGRAPH NINE**

Tinubu reiterates his commitment to long-term economic reform by emphasizing the need to address significant imbalances. This statement reflects the *tact* and *generosity* principles, highlighting his concern for the nation’s future and his dedication to comprehensive economic reform. Framing the fight against economic imbalances as a critical task for national progress, Tinubu aims to reinforce his commitment to long-term stability and garner public support for his reform agenda.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
I had promised to reform the economy for the long-term good by fighting the major imbalances that had plagued our economy.	Declarative	Commitment/ Explanatory	High
Ending the subsidy and the preferential exchange rate system were key to this fight.	Declarative	Informative/ Justification	High
This fight is to define the fate and future of our nation. Much is in the balance.	Declarative	Persuasive/ Explanatory	High

## **PARAGRAPH TEN**

In this paragraph, Tinubu warns of potential resistance from elites who may be adversely affected by his economic reforms. This acknowledgement of potential opposition reflects the *criticism* principle while maintaining a formal tone. Preparing the public for possible challenges and reinforcing the necessity of his reforms, Tinubu aims to bolster public resolve and support for his policies. This approach helps to address potential criticisms and emphasizes the importance of perseverance in implementing necessary changes.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
Thus, the defects in our economy immensely profited a tiny elite, the elite of the elite you might call them.	Declarative	Informative/Critical	Moderate
As we move to fight the flaws in the economy, the people who grow rich from them, predictably, will fight back through every means necessary.	Declarative	Informative/Critical	Moderate

### **Discussion of Key Findings**

In analyzing the segment, it is evident that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT) has skillfully navigated public sentiment, using language to rally support for his economically challenging policy of subsidy removal. His speech employs several strategies rooted in Leech's Politeness Principle, aimed at minimizing opposition and fostering support. These strategies include framing the subsidy removal, discussing its potential impacts, and detailing the government's measures to manage it.

First, PBAT adheres to the **tact maxim**, minimizing the perceived imposition on the audience. By presenting the subsidy removal as a necessary step for long-term economic stability, rather than an immediate burden, he shifts the focus from personal sacrifice to collective benefit. Phrases like

"we must act for the greater good" exemplify this approach, reframing the policy as an investment in the future, with the welfare of the nation at the forefront.

Next, the **generosity maxim** comes into play as PBAT acknowledges the potential sacrifices that citizens will need to make. Phrases such as "I recognize the challenges we face together" convey empathy, positioning the president as a leader who understands and cares about the hardships of the public. This not only generates goodwill but also helps establish a sense of shared struggle, reinforcing the notion that the government and the citizens are partners in this difficult journey.

In a third instance, the president uses the **approbation maxim**, celebrating the resilience of the Nigerian people. Through statements like "together, we will rise," he aligns himself with the public, reinforcing a sense of shared strength and determination. This positive reinforcement serves to boost the public's self-esteem and strengthens the collective resolve, further embedding PBAT as a leader who is in sync with the aspirations of the people.

The **modesty maxim** is also evident in the president's speech, particularly in his attempt to downplay his role in the decision-making process. Rather than taking full credit, PBAT emphasizes the collaborative nature of the decision, stating, "this is a decision reached after extensive consultation." By doing so, he not only mitigates potential backlash but also fosters a sense of inclusivity and transparency in governance, inviting the public to feel part of the process.

Moreover, PBAT's use of **indirectness** and **rhetorical questions** invites the audience to reflect on the broader implications of subsidy removal. Questions such as "What future do we envision for our children?" encourage the audience to internalize the reasoning behind the policy, engaging them in a thought process that aligns with the government's perspective. Additionally, his reference to the previous administration—"the preceding administration saw this looming danger as well... it made no provision in the 2023 Appropriations for subsidy after June this year"—serves as a subtle way of shifting the blame while maintaining politeness. By doing so, PBAT aligns himself with the approbation maxim, reinforcing his leadership and the legitimacy of his decisions.

This analysis, in line with Leech's Politeness Principle, demonstrates that PBAT's speech is dynamic, reflecting the president's strategic use of language to navigate complex socio-political landscapes. His speech is crafted according to the maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, and

modesty, all of which help to ensure his communication remains socially appropriate, conciliatory, and engaging.

### **Summary of Findings**

The application of Geoffrey Leech's politeness principle has provided a clear framework for understanding how PBAT strategically employs language to maintain social harmony and mitigate face-threatening acts. Through each of Leech's maxims, the president has:

1. Minimized the negative impact of the subsidy removal on the audience.
2. Emphasized the benefits and collective support for citizens.
3. Acknowledged the contributions of previous administrations and the need for shared effort.
4. Framed achievements and decisions without overt self-promotion.
5. Presented expressions of common ground and unity with the audience.
6. Employed empathetic language to connect with personal struggles and experiences.

Through these strategies, PBAT effectively manages potential opposition and seeks to maintain public support, underscoring the importance of empathetic communication in political leadership, especially in times of crisis.

### **Conclusion**

The application of Leech's politeness principle in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's national broadcast provides a comprehensive view of audience engagement in political discourse. By emphasizing social harmony and minimizing face threats, the president aims to create a sense of unity and cooperation among citizens. The speech is structured to reassure the public, acknowledge the current challenges, and outline the government's plans to address them. By focusing on the long-term benefits of the reforms, PBAT seeks to build trust and patience among the Nigerian people. This detailed analysis illustrates how the speech's content and tone align with these principles, positioning the president's message as a persuasive communication tool designed to rally support for his government's economic reform agenda. Ultimately, this study highlights the crucial role of linguistic strategies in shaping public response to policy changes in Nigeria.

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