

Coinages and Slogans as Strategies for Identity Construction in the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigates how coinages and slogans are political conduits used strategically by individuals in constructing their identities in the 2019 general election political discourse in Nigeria. The study adopted Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical analysis model of CDA, together with Clusivity theory and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. Twenty-four comments involving coinages and slogans that cut across popular subject areas of politics relating to the Nigerian 2019 general election between 2018 and 2019 are purposively sampled. Data for the study were retrieved from the Nairaland forum archives. The comments were sampled, scrutinized and analysed using the content analysis method. The use of coinages and slogans can be implicit or explicit. It was revealed that when constructing identity, political actors can employ coinages and slogans to reflect the notion of "positive self-representation" and "negative other-representation" established in Wieczorek's strategies of Inclusion and Exclusion in Clusivity theory. Coinages and slogans are also used for different discursive strategies such as persuasion, negotiation, sarcasm and rhetorical questions. Political actors used coinages and slogans as political conduits to delineate and negotiate their political affiliations and dissociations and also to achieve, advocate, alter and (re)build their political ideologies and leanings in the 2019 general election in Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language has been identified as the most flexible and pervasive of the many symbolic resources available to man for identity construction. As language is central to all social processes and practices, it is thus considered as the most potent tool for (re)shaping and (re)constructing the social realities and political identities as they are negotiated, (re)constructed and thus projected in the broader social and cultural contexts (Sajjad et al., 2017). De Fina (2011) points out that human communication essentially revolves around exchanging information, getting things done, expressing feelings and emotions, but it also aims at conveying to one another what kind of people we are; which geographical, ethnic, social communities we belong to; where we stand in relation to ethical and moral questions; or where our loyalties are, in political terms. People use language to represent images about themselves and equally to recognize images of other people, to categorize them, to align or detach themselves, marking their similarities and differences. Thus, language is central to the construction and negotiation of identities. In the same vein, Lamidi and Aboh (2011) posit that language is employed by people in the social construction of everyday life. When we

speak or write, language plays a potent role in articulating, interpreting, proclaiming and reproducing our identities and ideological views. The language we use, whether it is our mother tongue or not, describes who we are.

At the crux of development and civilization lies the vital importance of the world political situation and this has made politics and political discourse a subject for intensive interdisciplinary researches as well as a subject for special teaching (Wodak and Chilton 2005). Therefore, the growing academic interest towards political discourse can be regarded as a social request, aimed to study not only the peculiarities of political thought and actions, but also those linguistic, rhetoric and strategic means political actors employ to affect and control public opinion. As captured in the words of Farr (1989: 48), there is an inextricable relationship between politics and language. Politics would not only be indescribable without language, it would also be indefinable. Nations would not be able to declare independence, ‘leaders instruct partisans, citizens protest war, or courts sentence criminals. Neither could we criticise, plead, promise, argue, exhort, demand, negotiate, bargain, compromise, counsel, brief, debrief, advise nor consent. To imagine politics without these actions would be to imagine no recognizable politics at all’.

Politicians embellish their language in a unique way to give extra effect and force to their message in order to achieve their political objectives. This can be embodied in the rhetoric and strategic use of coinages and slogans. Coinages are words created for new experiences, especially where the speaker of the language either experiences dearth of correct standard lexical items or uses a word or an expression to satisfy the communicative purpose of his immediate environment (Abdullahi-Idiagbon and Olaniyi 2011). Slogans can be regarded as a peculiar type of socio-political advertisements. Unlike commercial advertising text whose illocutionary function is to stimulate people’s buying activity by convincing them and offering them a certain product as a solution to their problem, a political slogan focuses on regulating ideological relationships in the society by informing people about ideological-conceptual platforms of political parties and subjects. The effectiveness of a political slogan depends on how well the ideology declared in the slogan in a maximally condensed form appeals to public consciousness (Kirvalidze and Samnidize 2016).

Linguistic studies are of paramount importance because political thoughts and actions are in consonance with political utterances. Words interpret events or actions. Any political idea or action is born, prepared, realized and controlled with the help of language. Also, there is the manifestation of personality either as an individual or a member of a group. This is a form of social identity where individuals use linguistic items, such as coinages and slogans as strategies to shape their identities and gain their political efficacy.

Elections are among the most ubiquitous phenomena in many parts of the contemporary world, particularly in political systems that have embraced competitive politics (Yagboyaju 2015). Nigeria’s fourth republic has witnessed six general elections (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019). There are several things that make the 2019 general election unique. According to Punch Newspaper report on 2019 elections, the elections were the most planned for. Preparations started with the INEC Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021; thereafter, there were Election Management System, Election Project Plan and Elections Operations Support Centre. Besides, the elections are the costliest in Nigeria’s history. Officially, the Federal Government funded the elections with N242bn, N189bn of which went to INEC while the remaining N53bn was shared by the security agencies for the purpose of election security. A factsheet on the 2019 General Election revealed that there were 84 million registered voters out of which 72 million voters collected their Permanent Voter Cards; 91 registered political parties; 119,973 Polling Units; 120 Accredited Domestic Observers and 36 Accredited Foreign Observers and 23,000 candidates competing for 1,558 positions. Being the most contested for, this year’s elections have also attracted a lot of controversies. From October 7, 2018, when political parties finished conducting their primaries, there have been over 640 court cases from aggrieved aspirants.

Another thing that singled out the 2019 general election is that it featured some attention-grabbing coinages such as “Obidient”, “Atikulate”, “Obidiently Atikulated”, “Ortomatic” and slogans such as “Take it back”, “Next level”, “O to ge” ,”Omi Titun”, “I stand with Atiku”, “O penkele”, etc.

The present study therefore examines how coinages and slogans are used to construct individual or collective identities. There is so much to coinages and slogans that they heave ideo-political and socio-cultural significance. Coulmas (2005:178-9) cited in Lamidi and Aboh (2011) holds the view that “every speech act is an act of identity, and all utterances vary with respect to the relative importance of identity display”. Wieczorek’s (2013) Clusivity theory adopted in this study refers to the different strategies of inclusion and exclusion that are linguistically coded in discourse. It examines the manifestations of association and dissociation in discourse practices which project the notion of “positive self representation” and “negative other-representation”. In view of this, coinages and slogans can be seen as political conduits which people use to delineate and negotiate their political affiliations and dissociations and also to achieve, advocate, alter and (re)build their political ideologies and leanings.

Contextualising the Problem

Several studies have been carried out on different aspects of identity construction. While some studies within linguistics are quick to demonstrate how language constructs identity in offline discourse (Joseph, 2004; Lamidi and Aboh, 2011; Zamfir, 2014; Mbarachi and Igwenyi, 2018) some are based on online discourse (Chiluwa, 2014; Lamidi 2016). Pointedly, little or no attention has been given to the strategic uses of coinages and slogans in the construction of identity in Nigeria as well as Nigerian politics. However, some studies on coinages and slogans are tilted towards sociolinguistic perspectives (Adegbija, 2004; Pousada, 2011; Abdullahi-Idiagbon and Olaniyi, 2011) while others are aimed at their significance in advertising (Prace, 2010; Ke and Wang, 2013; Hakkinen, 2016).

Closely related to this study are studies based on comparative analyses and their political significance in America, China and India (Marinelli, 2012; Raj, 2007; Fukunaga and Zhang, 2007) and this tends to undermine the fundamental roles of coinages and slogans in the construction of identities in political discourse. It is thus pertinent to fill this vacuum in scholarship given the importance of coinages and slogans as political conduits in Nigeria.

Research Questions

In order to provide focus and direct attention to the major issues in this study, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. How do coinages and slogans construct identity in the 2019 general election in Nigeria?
2. What roles do coinages and slogans play in identity construction?
3. What are the ideological strategies inherent in identity construction involving coinages and slogans?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been studies on identity construction and political discourse from different fields of study. Some of such include Fairclough (1992, 1995), Lamidi and Aboh (2011), Lamidi (2016), Kirvalidze and Samnidze (2016), Emeka-Nwobia (2016), Moustafa (2015), Chiluwa (2014), De Fina (2011), Oyeleye and Osisanwo (2013), Taiwo (2007), Osisanwo (2016), Sajjad et al, (2017), Yagboyaju (2015) among others.

Lamidi and Aboh (2011) examine names as a strategy for identity construction in selected 21st century novels. They maintain that names give a sense of personal identity and

uniqueness and that they have individual and societal importance. The study reveals that the names people choose for their children and other people reflect the relationship between name and identity. They see names as political conduits, which novelists use to depict their country's socio-political dislocations. This study is similar to the current one as coinages and slogans also serve as political conduits which political actors use to show their political affiliations and dissociations.

Similarly, Lamidi (2016) explores identity construction in the Nairaland virtual community. The study presents that members of a virtual community have identities and several features like language, culture, gender/sexuality, ideology, religion, social class and ethnicity mark identity on the Nairaland forum. It also reveals that identity can be individual or group; linguistic or cultural; ethnic or national; obscure or plain; ascribed/imputed; legitimised, projected or rejected. The study also shares semblance with the current study in that it pays tribute to the fact that identity can be marked through language and ideology and that it can be linguistic, projected or rejected. However, it does not discuss identity construction in relation to coinages and slogans which is the focus of the current study.

Political discourse is basically a field of discourse analysis which primarily focuses upon the discourse practices produced in specific political forums or political spheres such as parliamentary debates, legislative processes, hearings etc (Johnson and Johnson, 2000). So it can be elaborated as a field of discourse analysis which stresses upon the political discursive events in order to reveal the hidden ideologies and massive agendas of political actors. According to Van Dijk (1993, 1995, 1998c & 2006) cited in Sajjad et al (2017), political discourse does not refer only to the discourse of politicians who perform certain political actions but also to that of all those stake holders who directly or indirectly perform their roles in discursive political events.

Critical review of special researches devoted to the study of political discourse has revealed that it can be analyzed from at least four viewpoints:

- a. from the political point of view;
- b. from the linguistic viewpoint proper, where the researcher analyses the textual aspect of political discourse considering it as a verbal macrosign in its socio-cultural and political context;
- c. from the psychological point of view the aim of which is to reveal and define those strategies that are employed by political actors covertly or overtly in their speeches or utterances to gain political influence upon the addressee;
- d. from the individual-hermeneutic viewpoint during which the speaker's personal attitudes towards the target political situation are revealed (Kirvalidze and Samnidize 2016:161)

Sajjad et al (2017) investigate language, social media and political identity (re)presentation. They debate that language enables its users, specifically political actors, to exhibit the political ideologies and identities effectively, so the political actors frequently exploit these platforms to achieve their pre-defined political agendas.

Oyeleye and Osisanwo (2013) investigate the expression of ideologies in media accounts of the 2003 and 2007 general elections in Nigeria. The study reveals that both TELL and The News magazines put to use the ideological polarization between the ideological structures of ingroups and outgroups, such that ingroups typically emphasise their own good deeds while they de-emphasise their bad deeds; on the other hand, outgroups de-emphasise or even totally deny their own bad deeds while they emphasise their good ones. The study concludes that the two news magazines provide grounds for the writer to construct reality based on the ideological affiliations of the news magazines. The study is closely related to the present study as the diverse discursive instances of how ideologies are expressed and enacted through coinages and slogans are examined.

Taiwo (2007) examines how language is used in news headlines to reflect specific societal ideologies and power relation. The study shows the hidden ideological meaning behind written words in the media as portrayed in some Nigerian newspaper headlines and reveals how newspapers editors through their choice of expressions portray ideological postures on national issues in newspaper headlines. The study is relevant to the present study as diverse ideological strategies are examined.

Osisanwo (2016) deals with representation of Nigerian general elections and social actors in selected Nigerian news magazines' report. The study captures and reveals linguistic and discourse strategies deployed by selected magazines' reports in representing the political social actors and points out that the print media word choices are not neutral; rather, they carry the power that reflects the interests of those who speak or write. More so, it exposes the fact that media representations in Nigeria foreground the classification of Nigerian politics and politicians through various linguistic tactics and labelling strategies which promote their ideological leanings. The current study is also similar to this because it examines ways political actors label themselves and others through the strategic deployment of coinages and slogans.

Sherif (1937) takes a slogan to be a phrase, a short sentence, a headline, a dictum, which, intentionally or unintentionally, amounts to an appeal to the person who is exposed to it to buy some article, to revive or strengthen an already well-established stereotype, to accept a new idea, to undertake some action, to imply a value judgment. A coinage or slogan can also be a form of words for which memorability has been bought. It includes catchy and clever appellation or memorable lines and phrases, mottoes and catchwords, that standout from political campaigns and promotions with a socio-political purpose.

Many of the studies on coinages and slogans concentrate on semantic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic and advertising perspectives. Abdullahi-Idiagbon and Olaniyi, (2011) explores coinages in Nigerian English. They explain the sociolinguistic reasons for new forms of expressions identified as peculiarly non-native and Nigerian and conclude on the note that most of the coinages in Nigerian English are a result of the diffusions occurring between two cultures. The current study differs as it is not limited to reasons for the formation of these coinages and slogans but also explores their roles in discourses.

Prace (2010) deals with the language of advertising slogans and headlines. In particular, the study is concerned with word-formation processes as tools of linguistic creativity and innovation in print advertisements. The study explicates that word-formation processes are convenient linguistic means for integrating an aspect of creativity. The present study differs from this because it centres on political slogans.

Closely related to this study is Raj (2007). It explores political slogans and argues that repetition of political slogans is critical to the independence and struggle in India. The study maintains that political slogans in the phenomenon of political communication serve as a means for controlling mass consciousness and shaping the individual's reality. This study is relevant to the current study as it explores the indispensable roles of slogans in politics. However, it is limited to political slogans and does not consider coinages. Coinages and slogans are considered in the current study as potent tools for constructing, shaping and maintaining identities.

Theoretical Perspectives

In this study, theory triangulation is offered to get a better understanding of the concepts under study. Denzin (1970) elaborates theory triangulation as the use of multiple theories in the same study for the purpose of supporting or refuting research findings since multiple theories provide different lenses to the researcher to approach data.

This study will anchor on Norman Fairclough's (1992, 1995) model of Critical Discourse Analysis and Ruth Wodak's (2001, 2009) discourse-historical approach.

According to Fairclough (1995), political context offers a great opportunity to its actors to create such discursive discourse practices in local and international institutions which are quiet challenging for the discourse analysts from interpretative point of view. Pointedly, in Fairclough's model, CDA involves concrete, linguistic, textual analysis of language use in social interaction and this will prove useful to the study. Wodak's discourse-historical approach views discourse as a form of social practice. This means that discourse is connected synchronically and diachronically with other communicative events which are happening at the same time or which have happened before. For Wodak, the notion of context is crucial for CDA, since this explicitly includes socio-psychological, political and ideological components and thereby postulates an interdisciplinary procedure.

This study will also revolve around Wieczorek's (2013) Clusivity theory. As Wieczorek's recalls, "clusivity" refers to the different strategies of inclusion and exclusion that are linguistically coded in discourse. It also involves "Inclusion and Exclusion" in broader societal and political context. Identifying oneself with a particular individual or group develops a specific sense of belongingness that primarily affects the perception of individual about certain norms, actions, behaviours, ideology etc. (Wieczorek, 2013) Exclusions are primarily formulated on the basis of geographical, religious, ethnic and ideological discrepancies between groups and individuals. Political actors mostly act coercively through linguistic choices for different objectives such as, for setting agendas, selecting topics, positioning oneself and others in particular relationships etc. (Esses et al., 2011).

The linguistic theory for this study is Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics. Systemic Functional Linguistics considers language as social practice. It seeks to present a unitary vision of the systems, structures and functions of language, tolerating the fuzziness of categories that this inevitably implies. It fundamentally has two aspects – systemic and functional. Systemic Functional Linguistics postulates that the relationship between a language and the social functions that its serves is reflected in the internal organisation of the language. A grammar is thus not arbitrary but motivated and its features can be explained by the uses to which a language is put. Meanings, moreover, are created in and through language and not merely encoded by it.

3. METHODOLOGY

Data for this study are retrieved from the Nairaland forum archives. Comments involving coinages and slogans that cut across popular subject areas of politics relating to the Nigerian 2019 general election between 2018 and 2019 which the general election took place are purposely sampled. Data are collected through participant observation method where the researchers played a neutral role by monitoring participants' comments. Twenty four profiles with comments are randomly sampled from the forum. The comments are sampled, scrutinized and analysed using the content analysis method. The site is selected based on its popularity in Nigeria and the ability of its platforms to capture the phases and faces of political discourse.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of this study, the analysis is centred on the coinages and slogans that represent the African Action Congress (AAC), All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2019 general election in Nigeria. The potency of these coinages and slogans has gone beyond mere chorusing or chanting them at campaigns, political rallies and other political parades. There is so much to them that they heave ideo-political significance and are now exploited by political actors on online platforms to delineate and negotiate their political affiliations and dissociations and also to advocate and achieve their political ideologies and leanings.

- **Take it Back**

One election slogan that filled the air in the 2019 general election is ‘TakeItBack’. It is popularised by publisher of Sahara Reporters, Omoyle Sowore. Mr Sowore contested for the presidency on the platform of the African Action Congress (AAC) after he emerged the party’s candidate unchallenged on October 6, 2018, at the AAC’s national convention .Mr Sowore, an activist, is the convener of ‘takeItBack’ movement, with the core philosophy of taking the nation back from those who plunder its resources. Mr Sowore lost the presidential election to APC’s Muhammadu Buhari.

- **Next Level**

‘Next Level’ is the campaign roadmap of the ruling party, APC, launched in November 2018. President Buhari launched his 2019 presidential campaign titling it ‘Next Level’ on the argument that the past few years have put us in good stead to trudge on the Next Level of building an even stronger nation for our people. This was welcomed by supporters and thus gave birth to the chanting of the slogans across the nation.

- **Atikulate**

‘Atikulate,’ homophonic with the English adjective ‘articulate’ was coined from the Peoples Democratic Party 2019 presidential Candidate’s first name, Atiku. Shortly after former Nigerian Vice President, Atiku Abubakar emerged the presidential candidate of the Peoples’ Democratic Party at its convention in Port-Harcourt in 2018, the internet was awash with posts and comments expressing support for his candidature. Pertinently, the coinage ‘Atikulate’ was projected to campaign for the PDP flag bearer. A subtle campaign message was also launched to show that Mr Abubakar was more articulate and has better grasp of the issues plaguing Nigeria. It is not surprising to hear Nigerians say that they are ‘Atikulated’ in reference to throwing their support for Mr Atiku Abubakar.

- **Obidient**

Used alongside the ‘Atikulate’ coinage-cum-slogan is ‘Obidient’ (homophonic with the English adjective ‘obedient’). When paired together, it is said as “Obidiently Atikulated”. It was a campaign catchphrase coined with the name of Mr Atiku Abubakar’s running mate and former governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi.

Political Identity

Politics is based on identity and there can be no politics without identity (Smucker, 2011). Political identity refers to the identification of individuals on the basis of political affiliations, i.e. individuals and groups associate themselves with certain political groups and thus they adopt the attributes of the political party to which they belong. Political identity develops certain biased approaches among the individuals and groups which thus lead them towards prejudice, monopoly, hegemony etc. Meister (2001) elaborates that political identity represents the role of consciousness and the political affiliation. This points to the fact that there is a significant role of consciousness when individuals deploy coinages and slogans to construct their political identities thus revealing their affiliations, dissociations and ideological leanings.

In some instances, a poster can identify himself\herself with a political party by either adopting and employing the party’s slogan or coinage in his or her discourse or stating expressly his or her support for a political candidate by stating the candidate’s name or the party. In another instance, an individual can also dissociate from a political party by employing the slogan or coinage of the party to which he or she does not have affiliation

with. Thus, individuals construct their political identities by employing coinages or slogans to show their political affiliations and dissociations.

- a. [**GLOBALX**](#): A vote for Atiku, a vote for a thief. Write it down. Nigeria will be worse off with Atiku. As for me and my household, Sowore will be our man. Up AAC, let's **takeitback**
- b. [**immaculate1234\(m\)**](#): Suffer go kee buhari and osunbade
Reedem is supposed to drop you because, you are disgrace and a chronic liar who feed Nigerians with lies. Finally, let me tell apc supporters what they don't know...A government is said to be successful or satisfactory when the majority are happy just take a questionnaire and go from street to street to ask how this government had treated them and you discover that this government is poor and redundant
OK take for example
kerosene = 280 Jonathan = 50
fuel 150 = Jonathan = 80
dollar = 360
Even under this government new disease Don full everywhere to name a few deficiencies under this government
buhari is not what we want he is as useless as a scare crow
FOR ME I AM ATIKULATED AND OBIDIENT
YOU SHOULD CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATH MAKE NIGERIA GREAT I BEG UNA
- c. [**Almunjid\(m\)**](#): I'm 100% Buharist. **next level!** 

The discourse participants respectively identify themselves as members or supporters of AAC, PDP, and APC. The posters reveal their identities to lay credence to their claims. The coinages and slogans are strategically employed to drum the speakers' positive images into the minds of the audience. For instance, in Globalx's post, he identifies himself as a supporter of AAC by expressly stating the name of the candidate, Sowore; the name of the political party's acronym and the party slogan. More so, the use of the biblical phrase 'as for me and my household' can be seen as an attempt to give spiritual credence and authority to his comment in a bid to project his affiliation with Sowore. The speaker is conscious of peoples' religious sensitivity and therefore exploits this tendency to project his ideology and impose a common-sense assumption to drive home his important political message. This is however different from the strategies employed by Immaculate1234 and Almunjid. Immaculate1234 expresses his affiliation with PDP by foregrounding his identity with capitalisations and also by strategically using a declarative sentence with the party's coinages "...I am Atikulated and Obidient" to declare his identity. The use of the assertive pronoun 'I' shows his commitment to the candidature of Atiku and Obi. Similarly, Almunjid also employs a declarative but pointedly inserts '100%' to embody a statistical presentation of wholesomeness in support of his candidate.

One strategy political actors employ is the use of negative expressions to refer to their opponents' party slogans or coinages. This is aimed at drawing the attention of the audience to the negative things they may expect if their opponent's party is voted into power.

Political actors express their dissociations by employing coinages and slogans. The discourses below reveal that coinages and slogans are not used in a neutral sense but are strategically built up in discourse and so have become interactively significant by projecting individuals' identities.

- d. [Pato042](#): yes, it can't be vain... the people of zamfara are already enjoying their next level because bandits are already running rampage all over the place. boko boys and the herdsmen are busy slaughtering people and all buhari could do is to dish out promises...
- e. [joneses67](#): nigerians to expect the next level of hunger in this 2nd time
- f. [aolawale025](#): They said they are taking Nigeria to the next level next level to nowhere

Here, the discourse participants show their disapproval for the APC administration by employing the party's slogan to discredit them. They do this by nominalising the slogan thus making it perform an obligatory role in the sense that removing the slogan from those positions will render the discourse incoherent. They use this slogan discursively to construct anti-APC identities.

Pointedly, people have peculiar ways of constructing identities for themselves through coinages and slogans. They do so by strategically drawing on their linguistic materials along with political parties' slogans or coinages. This they do covertly or overtly. Thus, the identities projected are grouped into implicit identities and explicit identities.

Implicit Identity

Sometimes, political actors discursively relay their positions indirectly. They have the propensity of shaping or reshaping peoples' thoughts, preferences and ideologies through coinages and slogans without expressly stating their objectives.

- a. [slyd90\(m\)](#): WE ALL KNOW THEM ..BLOOD SUCKING PARTY....
AKITUlate and be **obidient** come FEB 16TH 
- b. [BafanaBafana](#): next level means different things for different people. For some, its **next level** of hardship, and so shall it be. For others, it is **next level** of good things. And it is so for us

In these comments, the discourse participants are doing different things with the coinages and slogan respectively. Slyd90 expresses his detestation for the ruling party by using the phrase 'blood sucking party'. He however tacitly reveals that he would vote PDP on February 16 and possibly wants others to do so in a seemingly vague utterance by employing the coinages 'Atikulate' and 'obideint'. Thus the coinages and slogan serve as markers of saying the unsaid, unexpressed or unvoiced. Pointedly, for BafanaBafana, the indirect opening of his comment is a careful way of naturalizing his ideological position and making some specific claims about next level. 'Next level' is indirectly used to signify the APC led administration and also to signal his membership with or support for APC. Initially, he seems to maintain a neutral position by using the prepositional phrase 'for some' and 'for others' thus signalling a sense of exclusion. However, he identifies with the political party not only by adopting the party's slogan in his discourse but using the pronoun 'us' to signal a sense of inclusion with the party.

Explicit Identity

Here, individuals expressly identify with a political party or they adopt a political party's coinage or slogan for self-description. This implies that identifying and placing their affiliations, dissociations or leanings would not be difficult as they are ready to reveal their true identities.

- a. [slyd90\(m\)](#): Enough of blood sheds...send Bubu back to Daura...
I am ATIKULated and obedient

- b. Isaacvin(m): dont say dat bro, if u think he is d right person, play ur part by voting for him. I stand with Omoyele Sowore together we shall **takeitback**
- c. Almunjid(m): I'm 100% Buharist. **next level!** 

In these comments, the political actors clearly delineate their leanings by engaging the political parties' slogans and coinages and using the assertive 'I' to declare their ideological orientations. Slyd90 believes the APC administration is saturated with bloodshed and thus he is ready to support PDP by being Atikulated and Obedient. Issacvin asserts that with Sowore, they will take Nigeria back while Almunjid clearly discloses his support for Buhari. Pointedly the analysis on coinages and slogans can be viewed under the two broad ideological strategies: positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation.

A. Positive self-presentation

In the 2019 general election political discourse, political actors use different positive strategies to influence the decision of others. In this situation, each of them tries to present their party image positively by emphasising their good deeds and de-emphasising their bad deeds. They see and classify themselves and fellow supporters as the good ones. This they do by employing the political parties' coinages and slogans.

- a. id911: Atiku is a refine and modern leader who respects public opinion a lot. He knows Nigerians won't be happy if he doesn't attend the debate unlike Buhari that doesn't give a damn about what anyone thinks.

This is one of the reasons majority of Nigerians are **Atikulating**

- b. ClearFlair: Nigeria improved. The Buhari administration repositioned Nigeria for greatness. The PDP had had us heading into an abyss but Buhari took control of the ship and steered us clear of trouble and into the **next level**. Hallelujah!!!

In these comments, the discourse participants acknowledge and applaud the positive sides of both Atiku and Buhari. It can be said that Id911 choice of projecting Atiku's identity is by employing the adjectives 'refined' to explicate that Atiku is free from political impurities and 'modern' to illuminate his contemporary ideas to Nigerian issues. More so, the verb 'respects' is engaged. We can suggest that the verb is employed to show a feeling of a leader who understands the importance of the people. He ended with the 'Atikulating' slogan to reveal that majority of Nigerians are supporting Atiku. ClearFlair on the other hand captures the efficacy of Buhari led administration in a metaphoric sense. Buhari is conceived as captain steering the ship of Nigeria out of trouble and into a state of safeness, that is, the next level.

B. Negative other-presentation

Pertinently, political actors also use different negative strategies to influence, build or rebuild the decisions of others. In this situation, they employ coinages and slogans in their discourses to present the image of other parties or the parties' flag bearers negatively by emphasising their bad deeds and de-emphasising their good deeds. Some of such discourses go into calumny, running the parties or the candidates down and are also tilted towards attacking their opponents' character and ability.. They see and classify other parties or candidates as the bad ones.

a. **SouthWestBlood**: The true youth who are about a better Nigeria are all supporting and queuing for Omoyele Sowore. The only celebrity who is not afraid to declare his support for this vibrant and intelligent man, Omoyele Sowore is Tunde Ednut. Other celebrities might be one of our enemies, but we shall prevail.

#HurricaneSowore is here. Tell your neighbour. Let's **takeitback** from the rogues together.

b. **MissSweet**: Please let's vote wisely we are tired of liars and dullards. Let's **atikulate** together. Let's make 9ja better.

c. **Racoon**(m): "**Every right thinking Nigerian knows where the pendulum is swinging to.**" Say no to bigotry, nepotism, cluelessness, lifelessness, incompetency and ineptitude. Have you **Obidiently Atikulated** already?

d. **budaatum**: *I would rather be a mad sai bubu 4+4 next level Than let thieves loot my head away!*

In these comments, the discourse participants intend to discredit one another's opponents by employing the negative-other presentation ideological strategy. The choices of nouns employed are succinctly meant to derogate the opponents and to paint them negatively. Pertinently, in reference to other candidates, MissSweet regards them as 'liars' and 'dullards' to explicate the mental state of the candidates while SouthWestBlood prefers the noun 'rogues' to lay out their dishonesty. The pronominal selections further points to the ideological differences between the speakers and the members of the other party being referred to. This is best revealed in the use of 'we' and 'us'.

More so, the other candidates are said to be bigots, clueless, lifeless, incompetent and displays nepotism and ineptitude according to Racoon. He ended with an ideologically motivated question involving coinages 'Have you Obidientedly Atikulated already?' The question seems to be an attempt to reveal his identity and unveil his political affiliation. Budaatum also shares in this ideology by referring to other candidates as 'thieves'. The choice of the verb 'loot' clearly parades the others as corrupt. We can conclude or stand to reason that the victimisation and image-laundering strategies here are meant to strategically condemn the candidates respectively and also to unveil political affiliations and dislocations.

Szanto (1978) describes the language of politics as a lexicon of conflict and drama, of ridicules, and reproach, pleading and persuasion, colour and bite permeated. A language designed to valour men, destroy some and change the mind of others. Political actors sometimes use coinages and slogans to embellish their language in a unique way to give extra effect and force to their message in order to achieve their objectives. This can be embodied in discursive strategies involving persuasion, negotiation, sarcasm and rhetorical question.

Coinages and Slogans as instruments of Persuasion

In the comments below, the political actors deploy coinages and slogans as weapons of persuasion and pleading to get the audience to accept them and their party and to reject others and their parties.

a. **DonFreshmoney**(m): The north is not only north west, and the south is not only south west. Other regions particularly north east and south East has a say in Nigeria..

I urge everyone to get **Atikulated**

In this comment, the assertive ‘I’ functions as subject in the declarative sentence. The ‘everyone’ that occurs as complement refers again to the audience, especially the voting populace. The sentence reveals the attitude of the speaker to his audience and shows that he is making a plea through the use of ‘urge’. DonFreshmoney advises the audience and encourages them to do something which is captured in the use of ‘Atikulated.’ The deployment of the coinage points to the fact that the speaker wants the audience to support or vote for Atiku.

Coinages and Slogans as instruments of Negotiation

The deployment of coinages and slogans as instruments of negotiation is projected in the comment below:

a. adecz: Death,
Death,
Death!!
That is the only story coming from
Northern Nigeria.

atikulate , atikulate!! Dem no gree.

Next level never even start

The ideology of negotiation can be implicit or explicit. The speaker’s use of the pidginised expression ‘atikulate, atikulate!!Dem no go gree’ meaning they will not accept or agree signals a sense of negotiation. The meaning inherent in this implicit ideologically motivated expression is an attempt by the speaker to co-opt the audience to share in his ideological leaning in order to support or vote for Atiku. The mention of ‘death’ is very important in this analysis. This speaker’s repetitive use of ‘death’ which has a negative and frightening connotation serves to give urgency to the speaker’s comment. Apparently, his final assertion ‘next level never even start’ meaning next level has not even started is riddled with an ideological undertone to discredit the APC administration.

Coinages and Slogans as Instrument of Sarcasm

Pertinently, coinages and slogans are employed to sarcastically demean, show irritation or to pass a satirical wit. The deployment of ‘next level’ below is an attempt to satirically discredit the APC administration and also to pass a witty remark.

a. Pato042: yes, it can't be vain... the people of zamfara are already enjoying their **next level** because bandits are already running rampage all over the place. boko boys and the herdsmen are busy slaughtering people and all buhari could do is to dish out promises upon promises...

b. AstroG: Nigerian Girls, Taking their Oloshoism to the Next Level

Next Level of Prostitution



Coinages and Slogans as Rhetorical Techniques

Rhetorical questions are those in which the question is not answered directly, but rather is implied by what is said. It is also used when a speaker who wishes to avoid stating the obvious uses a rhetorical question that will imply what he or she considers being obvious. On the other hand, a speaker who wishes to convey something that is not obvious will sometimes use rhetorical question to suggest that what is not obvious is obvious.

a. **SouthWestBlood(m)**: Are you still doubting the #takeitback movement to take back Nigeria from the shackles of rogues and corruption personified persons running the affairs of this great nation? Now is the time to think otherwise and start something positive for the #takeitback movement. While I campaign and spread the awareness offline, I will also be posting important news regarding the #takeitback movement.

I have one question for you. What are you doing to #takeitback?

b. **UbanmeUdie**: Idiots!

Make them trek come back na or did they loose their legs to Senegal too?

I only pity those whose blood pressure rose up yesterday and those whose betting tickets brought regrets.

Can anything good come out of **next level**???

c. **Racoons(m)**: "Every right thinking Nigerian knows where the pendulum is swinging to." Say no to bigotry, nepotism, cluelessness, lifelessness, incompetency and ineptitude. Have you **Obidiently Atikulated** already?

In the comments above, rhetorical questions are used for ideological projections. For instance, In order to project the ideology of positive self-representation and negative other representation, UbanmeUdie deploys the rhetorical question 'Can anything good come out of next level?' The question creates a sense of defacing the image of APC administration by making them unacceptable to the audience.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This study focused on coinages and slogans as strategies for identity construction in the 2019 general election in Nigeria. The study depended on Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak's model of Critical Discourse Analysis. The study also relied on Clusivity theory, focusing on the occurrences of association and dissociation in the discourse practices which reflect the notion of "positive self-representation" and "negative other-representation" and Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics. This eclectic approach has helped to reveal certain facts about the complex nature of coinages and slogans in identity construction. The analysis revealed that coinages and slogans have ideo-political significance and are now exploited by political actors on online platforms to delineate and negotiate their political affiliations and dissociations and also to advocate and achieve their political ideologies and leanings.

The use of coinages and slogans can be implicit or explicit. In this sense, there are ways political actors deploy coinages and slogans in their discourse to construct covert or overt identities thereby relaying their positions directly or indirectly. It is revealed that when constructing identity, political actors can employ coinages and slogans to reflect the notion of "positive self-representation" and "negative other-representation". Moreover, they are discursively used for different discursive strategies such as persuasion, negotiation, sarcasm and rhetorical questions.

People use language resources in order to do things and their choice of particular discursive resources is realized within activities. In this sense, coinages and slogans are not used in political discourse in a neutral way; they carry ideo-political significance in their use. Pointedly, the study concludes that one strategic way political actors construct their identities

and revealing their leanings, affiliations, dissociations, similarities and differences, is through the linguistic deployment of coinages and slogans.

The study has revealed the constitutive roles of coinages and slogans in the construction of identity and opens up further areas of CDA investigation into the complex nature of coinages and slogans. It is hoped that future CDA researches will align with the theoretical dictates of this study to further unravel the intricate bonds that hold among coinages, slogans, language and identity.

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