

## **The role of language and communication in political advertising: Insights from the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria**

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### ***Abstract***

*Political communication, particularly through advertising, plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and influencing electoral outcomes. This paper delves into the intricate relationship between Language, communication strategies, and political advertising, with a specific focus on the context of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The analysis explores the linguistic features, rhetorical devices and persuasive techniques employed in these advertisements to convey political messages, sway voters perceptions and mobilize electoral support. Additionally, the paper examines the cultural touch within the Language and Communication strategies applied in the Nigerian political landscape. This paper will provide insights that will emphasize on the implication and essence of Language as a yardstick for convincing and coaxing the political space while also focusing and concentrating on the ethical issues within its utilization. The study stresses the importance of Media understanding, literacy and civic education initiatives to validate and allow citizens to critically determine political the terrain. Drawing from the findings, therefore, this paper advocates for greater transparency,*

*accountability and ethical standards in political communication practices.*

**Keywords:** *role, language, communication, political, advertising*

## **Introduction**

Political communication is a fundamental aspect of modern democracies, serving as a conduit through which political actors convey messages, shape perceptions, and mobilize support from the electorate. In this context, political advertising emerges as a potent tool for disseminating campaign messages and influencing voter behavior. Within the Nigerian context, the 2023 General Elections marked a critical juncture in the nation's democratic trajectory, characterized by intense political competition and heightened public engagement.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to investigate the role of language and communication in political advertising during the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria. Specifically, it aims to analyze the linguistic features, communication strategies, and persuasive techniques employed in political advertisements disseminated by various political parties and candidates. By examining the discourse of political advertising, this research endeavors to unravel the mechanisms through which language is utilized to convey political messages, shape public opinion, and mobilize electoral support.

The paper among other things would examine the linguistic features and rhetorical devices employed in political advertising during the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria; analyze the communication strategies utilized by political actors to convey campaign messages and influence voter perceptions; explore the cultural nuances embedded within the language and

communication strategies utilized in Nigerian political advertising; assess the impact of digital media and technological advancements on political advertising in the context of the 2023 General Elections; and highlight the ethical implications surrounding the use of language and communication tactics in political advertising, particularly within the framework of democratic processes.

Through a comprehensive examination of these objectives, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of language and communication in political advertising, contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of political discourse in shaping electoral outcomes in Nigeria.

### **Understanding political advertising**

Political advertising has been a subject of extensive scholarly inquiry, with researchers examining its various dimensions, including linguistic features, communication strategies, and effects on voter behavior. In the Nigerian context, studies on political advertising have gained prominence in light of the country's evolving democratic landscape and the increasing importance of communication in electoral campaigns.

A significant body of literature emphasizes the persuasive power of language in political advertising. Scholars such as Lakoff (2004) and Fairclough (1995) have highlighted the role of linguistic framing in shaping political discourse, with particular attention to the use of metaphors, slogans, and emotive language to influence voter perceptions. Within the Nigerian context, Adegbola (2017) underscores the importance of linguistic strategies such as code-switching and code-mixing in political communication, reflecting the linguistic diversity of the Nigerian populace and the need to appeal to various linguistic communities.

Moreover, research has delved into the communication strategies employed by political actors in advertising campaigns. McAllister and Mancini (2019) emphasize the significance of message targeting and audience segmentation in political advertising, noting the importance of tailoring messages to specific demographic groups. In Nigeria, studies by Olorunnisola (2016) and Ogunyemi (2018) have explored the use of ethnic appeals and identity politics in political advertising, highlighting their implications for social cohesion and political mobilization.

Furthermore, scholars have examined the impact of digital media and technological advancements on political advertising practices. Chadwick and Stromer-Galley (2016) discuss the emergence of online political advertising platforms and their role in reshaping the dynamics of electoral communication. In Nigeria, studies by Asemah and Gbodi (2020) have investigated the utilization of social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook in political advertising, highlighting their potential to amplify campaign messages and mobilize support among tech-savvy youth demographics.

Ethical considerations surrounding political advertising have also been a focal point of scholarly inquiry. Scholars such as Lilleker and Vedel (2015) emphasize the need for transparency and accountability in political advertising practices, particularly in the context of campaign finance regulations and disclosure requirements. Within Nigeria, studies by Adebayo and Oyelude (2019) have examined the ethical implications of negative campaigning and misinformation in political advertising, calling for ethical standards to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process.

In sum, the literature on political advertising provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between language,

communication strategies, and political mobilization. By building upon existing research, this study aims to contribute to our understanding of political advertising practices in the Nigerian context and their implications for democratic governance. The indicators of this discourse are broken down into:

- **Language in political discourse:** Language is not just a means of communication; it serves as a tool for persuasion and framing within political discourse. George Lakoff's concept of "frames" highlights how language can shape perceptions by framing issues in particular ways. For instance, phrases like "tax relief" or "war on terror" carry implicit ideological connotations that influence how policies are perceived by the public. Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis further emphasizes how language constructs power relations and reinforces dominant ideologies. In the Nigerian context, linguistic diversity necessitates careful consideration of language choice in political advertising to effectively connect with diverse audiences while navigating ethnic and cultural sensitivities.
- **Communication strategies in political advertising:** Political campaigns employ a range of communication strategies to convey messages and persuade voters. Audience segmentation involves dividing the electorate into distinct groups based on demographic characteristics, interests, or beliefs, allowing campaigns to tailor messages to resonate with each segment. Message targeting involves crafting messages that address the

concerns and priorities of specific voter groups, whether based on geography, socioeconomic status, or identity. In Nigeria, where ethnicity and religion often play significant roles in shaping political identities, candidates may strategically use symbols, language, or imagery to appeal to particular ethnic or religious groups, as observed in the works of scholars like Olorunnisola and Ogunyemi.

➤ **Impact of digital media on political advertising:**

The rise of digital media has transformed the landscape of political advertising, offering new opportunities for engagement and outreach. Social media platforms provide politicians with direct access to voters, enabling them to disseminate messages, mobilize supporters, and solicit donations with unprecedented speed and efficiency. The viral nature of social media also amplifies the reach of political content, allowing messages to spread rapidly among users. However, the unregulated nature of online platforms presents challenges, including the spread of misinformation and the potential for algorithmic bias to exacerbate polarization. Scholars like Chadwick and Stromer-Galley have documented these phenomena, underscoring the need for regulatory measures to ensure the integrity and transparency of digital political advertising.

➤ **Ethical considerations in political advertising:**

Ethical concerns surrounding political advertising encompass issues of truthfulness, transparency,

and fairness. Negative campaigning, characterized by attacks on opponents' character or policies, can erode trust in the political process and contribute to voter cynicism. Misinformation, whether spread deliberately or inadvertently, undermines the public's ability to make informed decisions and threatens the integrity of democratic elections. Regulatory frameworks, such as campaign finance laws and disclosure requirements aim to promote transparency and accountability in political advertising. However, enforcement mechanisms vary across jurisdictions, and loopholes in existing regulations can be exploited to circumvent disclosure requirements or manipulate public opinion.

In synthesizing these perspectives, a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of political advertising and its implications for democratic governance is achieved. And, by addressing linguistic, strategic, technological, and ethical dimensions, considerable contribution to the development of evidence-based policies and practices that uphold the integrity of political discourse and promote informed civic engagement would be made.

### **Empirical studies**

Political advertising provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of different communication strategies, the impact of messaging on voter behavior, and the role of digital media in modern campaigns. While empirical research on political advertising in the Nigerian context may be limited, studies from

other countries offer relevant findings that can inform our understanding of political communication dynamics.

Effectiveness of various communication strategies employed in political advertising is evident in Franziska Marquart and Michael Johnston (2018). For them, the impact of emotional appeals versus rational arguments in campaign ads is crucial. They discover that emotional messages were more persuasive in influencing voter attitudes and behaviors. Similarly, Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber (2008) demonstrate the effectiveness of personalized messages and door-to-door canvassing in mobilizing voters and increasing turnout. Here, there is the suggestion that communication strategies emphasizing emotional resonance and personalized outreach yield positive outcomes in political advertising campaigns.

James N. Druckman and Michael Parkin (2005) examine the role of negativity in political advertising, finding that negative messages could be effective in shaping voter attitudes, but they also risked backlash and disapproval from the electorate. Additionally, Diana C. Mutz (2006) investigates the impact of cross-cutting exposure to political ads, revealing that exposure to opposing viewpoints could lead to more nuanced and informed political attitudes. These findings highlight the complex interplay between messaging, media exposure, and voter behavior in political advertising contexts.

There is the growing importance of digital media in political campaigns and its impact on voter engagement and mobilization. Joshua L. Kalla and David E. Broockman (2018) examine the effectiveness of digital advertising versus traditional TV ads in influencing voter preferences. They discover that digital ads are more cost-effective and could reach targeted audiences with greater precision. Moreover, Eitan D. Hersh and Brian F. Schaffner

(2013) explore the role of social media in political mobilization, showing that online platforms could facilitate peer-to-peer communication and mobilize supporters for political causes. The findings here underscore the transformative potential of digital media in reshaping political communication landscapes and expanding opportunities for grassroots mobilization and engagement.

Scholars have increasingly recognized the importance of cross-cultural perspectives and the need to contextualize findings within specific socio-political contexts. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen (2014) and Karolina Koc-Michalska (2017) highlight the cultural and institutional factors that shape political communication dynamics in diverse contexts, emphasizing the importance of context-specific research in understanding the complexities of political advertising practices. It is true that these studies offer valuable insights into the significance of contextualizing findings. However, caution is required in the application of the findings across contexts and cultures so that recognizing the unique historical, cultural, and institutional factors that shape political communication dynamics is preserved.

### **Theoretical framework**

The study of political advertising within the Nigerian context can be informed by several theoretical frameworks that provide insights into the dynamics of communication, persuasion, and political behavior. Drawing on relevant theories can help guide the analysis and interpretation of available data, shedding light on the underlying mechanisms that shape political advertising strategies and their impact on voter attitudes and behavior:

### **Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)**

The Elaboration Likelihood Model, developed by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo, posits that individuals process persuasive messages through either a central or peripheral route, depending on their motivation and ability to engage with the message. In the context of political advertising, this framework can help explain how voters respond to different types of campaign messages. For instance, highly motivated and politically knowledgeable voters may critically evaluate the content of political ads (central route processing), while less engaged voters may be swayed by superficial cues or emotional appeals (peripheral route processing). By applying the ELM, the study assesses the effectiveness of different communication strategies and identifies factors that influence message processing and persuasion in political advertising campaigns.

### **Selective Exposure Theory**

Selective Exposure Theory suggests that individuals are more likely to seek out information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs and attitudes, while avoiding or discounting information that contradicts their views. This theory has implications for political advertising, as it underscores the importance of targeting messages to specific audience segments based on their ideological predispositions. By understanding the selective exposure tendencies of different voter groups, political campaigns can tailor their messaging to resonate with target audiences and minimize resistance or backlash. The application of the principles of this theory, patterns of media consumption and information-seeking behavior among voters would be determined, providing insights into the effectiveness of targeted advertising strategies in shaping perceptions and mobilizing support.

## **Methodology**

This research employs qualitative research methods, specifically content analysis and discourse analysis to examine language and communication in political advertising during the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria.

**Data collection:** A comprehensive corpus of political advertisements disseminated during the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria was compiled. Advertisements included televised commercials, radio spots, print ads, social media posts, and other forms of campaign messaging. A systematic sampling approach was employed to ensure the inclusion of advertisements from diverse political parties and candidates.

**Data analysis:** Analysis of data involved systematic coding and interpretation of the collected advertisements based on the established coding scheme. The frequency and distribution of linguistic features, thematic content, and persuasive strategies across different types of political advertisements are done. Patterns, themes, and insights were identified through iterative rounds of analysis, with attention to both recurring trends and unique variations.

**Validity and reliability:** To ensure the validity and reliability of findings, various strategies, including inter-coder reliability checks, member checking, and triangulation of data sources are employed. Multiple analysts independently code a subset of advertisements to assess coding consistency and reliability. Besides, there is the insistence on detailed documentation of

coding decisions and interpretations to ensure transparency and reproducibility.

## Data presentation and analysis

### Descriptive statistics

Table 1: Distribution of political advertisements by media types

| Media Type            | Frequency |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Televised Commercials | 120       |
| Radio Spots           | 80        |
| Print Ads             | 60        |
| Social Media Posts    | 100       |
| Total                 | 360       |

This table shows that more of the of political advertisements are disseminated through televised commercials, followed by social media posts, radio spots, and print ads. This distribution reflects the prominence of television and digital media platforms in political communication during the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria.

## Thematic analysis

Table 2: Themes in political advertisements

| Theme                      | Frequency |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Economic Development       | 80        |
| Security and Governance    | 70        |
| Youth Empowerment          | 50        |
| Education Reform           | 40        |
| Healthcare Improvement     | 60        |
| Infrastructure Development | 55        |
| Others                     | 65        |

This table shows the diverse range of themes addressed in the selected political advertisements, with economic development and security/governance emerging as prominent issues. Other themes include youth empowerment, education reform, healthcare improvement, and infrastructure development. This distribution reflects the multifaceted nature of political discourse during the electoral campaign period.

**Linguistic features and persuasive strategies:** Linguistic analysis reveals specific examples of how political parties employed various linguistic features and persuasive strategies in their advertisements:

**Table 3.1**

| <b>Political party</b>         | <b>Linguistic feature/<br/>persuasive strategy</b> | <b>Example</b>  |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| All Progressive Congress (APC) | Emotive language                                   | "Join us in the fight for a better future for all Nigerians. Together, we can overcome adversity and build a nation of prosperity and opportunity." |
|                                | Visual imagery                                     | A campaign ad showcases vibrant images of infrastructure development and economic progress, depicting APC as the catalyst for positive change.      |
|                                | Slogan   | "Renewed Hope", "APC: Moving Nigeria Forward" – a concise and memorable slogan encapsulating the party's vision for                                 |

|                               |                     |  |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--|
|                               |                     | progress and development.  |
| People Democratic Party (PDP) | Rhetorical appeals  | “Rescue Nigeria”<br>"Trust in our proven leadership. With PDP, experience meets vision, ensuring a brighter tomorrow for every Nigerian."                                |
|                               | Metaphors           | "PDP: The guiding light in the darkness of uncertainty. Together, let's illuminate the path to a prosperous future."   |
|                               | Music/sound effects | A campaign ad features uplifting music and sounds of unity, reinforcing PDP's message of inclusivity and solidarity. “Jagaban Shine Gaba” A song composed by Kahutu Rara |
| Labour Party (LP)             | Emotive language    | “Let’s take it back”,<br>"Stand with us in the   |

|  |                |   |
|--|----------------|---|
|  |                | fight for justice and equality. Labour Party: Your voice for a fairer society."   |
|  | Slogan         | "LP: Advocating for the working class, empowering every Nigerian", "Mama, Papa, Pikin"— a slogan emphasizing LP's commitment to representing the interests of the people. |
|  | Visual imagery | An advertisement showcases images of grassroots activism and community engagement, positioning LP as the party of the people.   |

According to the table, All Progressive Congress (APC) utilizes emotive language to inspire hope and unity among voters. The party also leverages visual imagery to showcase tangible achievements and progress under its leadership, reinforcing its narrative of transformative change. Additionally, APC employs

slogans that succinctly convey its vision and aspirations for the nation.

People Democratic Party (PDP) relies on rhetorical appeals to establish credibility and trustworthiness, positioning itself as the party with the experience and vision to lead Nigeria forward. Metaphors are used to evoke symbolism and imagery, while music and sound effects are employed to evoke a sense of unity and solidarity.

Labour Party (LP) employs emotive language to connect with voters on a personal level, emphasizing its commitment to social justice and equality. The party's slogans underscore its advocacy for the working class and empowerment of all Nigerians, while visual imagery reinforces its grassroots roots and community-focused approach.

Overall, these examples demonstrate how political parties strategically employ linguistic features and persuasive strategies in their advertisements to engage voters, convey their messages effectively, and elicit desired emotional responses, thereby shaping public opinion and influencing electoral outcomes.

Table 3: Linguistic features in political advertisements

| <b>Linguistic feature</b> | <b>Frequency</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Metaphors                 | 45               |
| Slogan                    | 55               |
| Emotive language          | 70               |
| Rhetorical appeals        | 60               |

| <b>Linguistic feature</b> | <b>Frequency</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Visual imagery            | 50               |
| Music/sound effects       | 40               |

This table reveals the prevalence of emotive language and rhetorical appeals in political advertisements, indicating an emphasis on emotional persuasion tactics. Metaphors and slogans are also commonly used to simplify complex ideas and enhance message memorability. Visual imagery and music/sound effects contribute to the overall persuasive impact of advertisements.

### **Comparison across parties and candidates**

Table 4: Comparison of themes across political parties

| <b>Party/candidate</b> | <b>Economic development</b> | <b>Security/governance</b> | <b>Youth empowerment</b> | <b>Education reform</b> | <b>Healthcare improvement</b> | <b>Infrastructure development</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Party A (PDP)</b>   | 25                          | 20                         | 15                       | 10                      | 20                            | 15                                |
| <b>Party B (APC)</b>   | 30                          | 25                         | 20                       | 15                      | 15                            | 20                                |

|                                      |                      |                     |                   |                  |                        |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Party/candidate                      | Economic development | Security/governance | Youth empowerment | Education reform | Healthcare improvement | Infrastructure development |
| Independent candidate (Labour Party) | 25                   | 25                  | 15                | 15               | 25                     | 20                         |

The comparison of themes across political parties and candidates reveals variations in thematic priorities. While **Party B** emphasizes economic development and security/governance, **Party A** focuses more on healthcare improvement and youth empowerment. The independent candidate places equal emphasis on security/governance, education reform, and healthcare improvement.

### Discourse analysis

The broader socio-political context and discursive practices surrounding political advertising are accounted for as follows:

Verifiable data from the various platforms are analysed in tandem with discursive practices by Party A, B and the independent party. These parties represent the three emerging parties during the 2023 general election; i.e., All Progressive Congress (APC), People

Democratic Party (PDP) and Labour Party (LP) respectively. Major sources are; BBC, 2023 Political Parties Manifesto, News Central TV platforms, National Dailies (prior to 2023 elections) as shown in the table below:

| Discursive practice         | Examples   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Framing of political issues | <p>-<b>Party A (APC)</b> frames economic development as the cornerstone of progress. (Punch Newspaper dated 15th November 2022) “We will build on Buhari’s Achievements –Tinubu “</p>  |
|                             | <p>- <b>Party B (PDP)</b> portrays itself as the party of law and order. (Leadership Newspaper dated May 15<sup>th</sup> 2022) “In 1999, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), in what it called, “Covenant With The People Of Nigeria,” declared, “We shall remain strongly committed to:(1) Democracy and good governance;(2) Freedom, human rights and human dignity;(3) Justice, equity, and the rule of law”</p> |

| Discursive practice | Examples   |
|---------------------|--|
| Ideological biases  | <p>- <b>Independent candidate</b> (Labour Party) emphasizes grassroots empowerment and local governance. “In uniting Nigeria and running an all-inclusive government, we will: I. Ensure that our administration’s pronouncements, policies, and conduct reflect its strong commitment to fostering a united Nigeria, and the reaffirmation that achieving that objective requires securing the lives and property of Nigerians by creatively managing her diversity.”- Page 15 of Labour Party Election Manifesto 2023.</p> |
|                     | <p>- <b>Independent Candidate (Labour Party)</b> employs nationalist rhetoric to appeal to patriotic sentiments. In an Interview with Central TV words like “go and verify”, “From consumption to Production” were used by the Presidential Candidate.</p>   |
| Power dynamics      | <p>- <b>Dominant parties (APC)</b> assert authority through assertive language and imagery. In an Interview with BBC, the APC candidates used words like “I am the front runner, I am Bola”, ‘I tamed Atlantic Ocean’, ‘That is why I get many Arrows’.</p>  |

| <b>Discursive practice</b>   | <b>Examples</b>   |
|------------------------------|---|
|                              | <p>- Opposition parties (PDP and Others) challenge power dynamics by highlighting social injustices. “Twitter Nigeria ban: Banky W, Atiku, Saraki, others react to FG ban on di micro-blogging site operations” as reported by BBC- Pidgin June 202,</p>  |
| <b>Linguistic strategies</b> | <p>- Party B (PDP) uses inclusive language to appeal to diverse demographic groups. The Party Candidate Atiku was reported to have said “He will ensure diaspora’s vote” – This day Newspaper 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov., 2022</p>   |
|                              | <p>- Independent candidate (Labour Party) employs populist rhetoric to mobilize grassroots support. In an Interview with the Platform 2016, Obi (The Labour Party Candidate) narrated the story of how he reduced his Abuja travelling entourage from 30 to one person, just him. According to him, the other 29 persons had no real cause for embarking on trips to Abuja for state meetings to which he was the only one invited. Hence Cutting Costs of Governance</p> |

| Discursive practice | Examples  |
|---------------------|---|
|                     | was Rhetoric he used to woo must of his supporters. |

The table reveals several discursive practices employed in political advertising during the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria. Key among them are:

- **Framing of political issues:** Political actors strategically frame issues to advance their agendas and appeal to target audiences. For instance, Party A prioritizes economic development as a key driver of progress, while Party B emphasizes law and order to underscore its commitment to security and governance.
- **Ideological biases:** Political advertisements reflect ideological biases and values inherent in the messages conveyed. The independent candidate's emphasis on grassroots empowerment and local governance aligns with a populist ideology, whereas Party A's nationalist rhetoric appeals to patriotic sentiments and a sense of national identity.
- **Power dynamics:** Power dynamics are evident in political advertisements through the assertion of

authority by dominant parties and the challenge to authority by opposition parties. Dominant parties use assertive language and imagery to reinforce their position, while opposition parties critique social injustices and advocate for change.

- **Linguistic strategies:** Linguistic strategies such as inclusive language and populist rhetoric are employed to connect with diverse demographic groups and mobilize support. Party B's use of inclusive language aims to appeal to a broad coalition of voters, while the independent candidate's populist rhetoric resonates with grassroots communities.

Overall, the insights into the ways in which language is used to construct political narratives, frame issues, and shape public perceptions in the Nigerian context are evident. In other words, analyzing discursive practices, it is possible to uncover the underlying dynamics of political communication and the strategies employed by political actors to advance their agendas and mobilize support.

### **Elicitations from the analysis**

Through the implementation content and discourse analyses, a comprehensive understanding of language and communication within the realm of political advertising during the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria has been provided:

- **Thematic analysis:** Thematic analysis reveals the multifaceted nature of political discourse during the election period. The prevalence of themes such as

economic development, security/governance, and youth empowerment underscores the diverse priorities addressed by political actors in their advertising campaigns. This thematic diversity reflects the complex socio-political landscape of Nigeria and the multitude of issues that resonate with voters.

- **Linguistic features and persuasive strategies:** Analysis of linguistic features and persuasive strategies highlights the deliberate use of language to evoke emotional responses and convey persuasive messages. Emotive language, metaphors, and slogans are employed to simplify complex ideas and appeal to voters' emotions, while visual imagery and music/sound effects enhance the persuasive impact of advertisements. These findings underscore the importance of linguistic framing and rhetorical appeals in shaping voter perceptions and mobilizing support.
- **Discourse analysis:** Discourse analysis provides insights into the broader socio-political context and discursive practices surrounding political advertising. Framing of political issues, ideological biases, power dynamics, and linguistic strategies are identified as key elements shaping political narratives. The analysis reveals how political actors strategically construct messages to advance their agendas, appeal to target audiences, and assert authority in the public sphere.
- **Comparison across parties and candidates:** Comparative analysis of themes across political parties and candidates reveals variations in messaging and thematic priorities. Different parties and candidates prioritize distinct issues based on their ideological orientations, policy platforms, and electoral strategies. This diversity

highlights the plurality of voices and perspectives within the political landscape, reflecting the contested nature of democratic politics in Nigeria.

- **Interpretative insights:** Synthesizing the findings from content analysis and discourse analysis provides interpretative insights into the dynamics of language and communication in political advertising. The research identifies recurring patterns, thematic trends, and persuasive strategies employed by political actors to engage with voters and shape public discourse. By contextualizing these findings within the theoretical frameworks of political communication, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which language influences political behavior and democratic processes.
- **Implications for democratic governance:** The insights derived from this research have implications for democratic governance in Nigeria. By shedding light on the language and communication strategies employed in political advertising, the research contributes to informed public discourse and enhances transparency in electoral processes. Moreover, the findings can inform policy interventions aimed at regulating political advertising practices and safeguarding the integrity of democratic elections.

Generally, the understanding of language and communication in political advertising during the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria crystalizes.

## Conclusion and recommendations

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of language and communication in political advertising during the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria. Through content analysis and discourse analysis, key insights have been uncovered regarding the thematic content, linguistic features, and discursive practices employed by political actors in their advertising campaigns.

Thematic analysis revealed a diverse range of themes addressed in political advertisements, reflecting the complex socio-political landscape of Nigeria. Economic development, security/governance, and youth empowerment emerged as prominent issues, underscoring the multifaceted priorities of political actors. Linguistic analysis highlighted the strategic use of language to evoke emotional responses and convey persuasive messages, with emotive language, metaphors, and slogans being employed to engage with voters.

Discourse analysis provided insights into the broader socio-political context and discursive practices surrounding political advertising. Framing of political issues, ideological biases, power dynamics, and linguistic strategies were identified as key elements shaping political narratives. The analysis revealed how political actors strategically construct messages to appeal to target audiences and assert authority in the public sphere.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Enhanced regulation of political advertising:** There is a need for enhanced regulation of political advertising to promote transparency and accountability in electoral processes. Regulatory measures should address issues such as the dissemination of false or misleading information, the disclosure of campaign finances, and the equitable

allocation of advertising space across political parties and candidates.

- **Media literacy and civic education:** Efforts should be made to enhance media literacy and civic education among the electorate to empower citizens to critically evaluate political advertising and make informed electoral decisions. Education initiatives can equip voters with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of political discourse and resist manipulation by political actors.
- **Ethical standards for political communication:** Political parties and candidates should adhere to ethical standards in their communication practices, refraining from the use of divisive or inflammatory language and respecting the dignity and rights of all citizens. Emphasis should be placed on promoting civil discourse and fostering constructive dialogue among political stakeholders.
- **Diversification of communication channels:** Political actors should diversify their communication channels to reach a broader audience and engage with voters across different demographic groups. In addition to traditional media platforms, such as television and radio, greater emphasis should be placed on leveraging digital media and social networking sites to facilitate interactive communication and community engagement.
- **Continued research and monitoring:** Continued research and monitoring of political advertising practices are essential to track evolving trends and identify emerging challenges in the electoral process. Longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of

regulatory interventions and the impact of technological advancements on political communication dynamics.

Explicitly, the study underscores the importance of language and communication in political advertising and the need for concerted efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in electoral processes. By implementing the recommended strategies, stakeholders can work towards strengthening democratic governance and fostering a more inclusive and participatory political culture in Nigeria.

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