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A Transitivity Analysis of the Manifestos of Two Nigerian Presidential Candidates

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Abstract

Manifestos serve as a means for political leaders to execute their plans and to touch on an array of issues. This study examines the transitivity processes in the manifestos of two Nigerian presidential candidates. A content analysis approach is adopted in the study. The findings reveal that the frequencies in the major process types in Peter Gregory Onwubuasi Obi's manifesto (material 163, representing 73.4%; relational 36, representing 16.2%; mental 22, representing 9.9%) exceed those of Bola Ahmed Tinubu (material 114, representing 88.4%; relational 09, representing 6.9%; mental 06, representing 4.6%). The study has, as well, shown that Peter Gregory Onwubuasi employs the major process types to establish his inclination to liberate Nigeria, to show social solidarity with the citizens and to call for good leadership. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, likewise, uses the process types but more of the mental process as a trajectory for restoring systems, crusading for financial freedom and establishing industries. With insight from transitivity, the study has provided a linguistic perspective on political discourse, demonstrating how linguistic choices in manifestos reflect the social and political intentions of political leaders.

Keywords

systemic functional linguistics, transitivity, political manifesto

Introduction

Political Discourse Analysis (henceforth PDA) is a critical enterprise that concentrates on political speeches. Dunmire (2012, P. 735) noted 'PDA comprises inter-and multi-disciplinary research that focuses the linguistic and discursive dimensions of political text and talk and on the political nature of discursive practice'. The multidisciplinary nature of PDA has given the room in a manner that it brings together multiple disciplines to investigate socio-political issues and phenomena pertinent to various areas of scholarship. Dunmire (2012) argued that PDA should not merely contribute to discourse studies, but must also contribute to political science and the social sciences more generally. This means that PDA should be able to answer genuine and relevant political questions and deal with issues discussed in the political domain. This, undeniably, remains the focus of this study and cannot be ignored. Fairclough (1992) and van Dijk (1997) similarly hold the view on PDA to do with the analysis of political discourse, where the text and talk of politicians remain (overtly) within political contexts. It is based on this scholarly concept the present study is grounded.

Highlighting the above, it is important to echo that Political discourse is all about a discourse of politicians. This notion necessitates that discourses can be qualified as political when they take place in institutional situations where the speaker expresses his/her opinion as a politician (Kirvalidze & Samnidze, 2016). As Bayram (2010, P. 24) stated, 'Politics is a struggle for power to put certain political, economic and social ideas into practice'. It is in this perspective Politicians are typically seen as engaging in activities such as seeking consensus, formulating policies, negotiating and mediating conflicts, representing interests, and opposing the policies of others through fundamental linguistic activities (Paul, 2004), in their pursuit of capturing power.

At this point, it is essential to state that a manifesto, which is the centrality of this study, entails the policies and aims of a political leader and party. Customarily, before elections, political parties and candidates exhibit fliers coupled with texts to reproduce what they want to vend to the electorates. In the framework of the present study, it reiterates that Political manifestos lay out the party's official positions on the issues of importance prior to an election, and identify those issues the party acknowledges as salient (Däubler & Benoit, 2013). Following this background, it is far-reaching with most voters in considering the intricacies of what are enshrined in political parties' manifestos before deciding on their choice of party to vote. This throws light on the fact that the importance of manifestos within the domain of PDA cannot be overemphasized.

Most often, studies of politicians take a discourse analytical approach (Van Dijk, 1997). In the early 2000 and beyond, numerous researchers such as: (Appiah, 2015; Henn & Jahn, 2000; Chu, 2021; Gyasi & Sarfo-Kantankah, 2021; Logogy, 2021; Pearce, 2004; Schaffner, 2004; Nartey, 2024) have explored much on inaugural addresses, state of the nation addresses, presidential debates and campaign speeches. Most of these political studies dwell so much on Discourse Analysis and /or Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), while others too have been explored using different linguistic approaches and theories. So far, the extant literature largely assumes that there is a dearth of scholarship on the 2023 Nigerian presidential manifestos analyzed from a Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL)

perspective. The present study addresses this gap by focusing on the 2023 manifestos of these two vibrant political parties: Labour Party, led by Peter Gregory Onwubuasi Obi and All Progressive Congress, APC, led by Bola Ahmed Tinubu, all in Nigeria. Even though at the time of elections, eighteen (18) candidates vied for the 2023 presidential position to be elected, the choice for these two candidates' manifestos has become momentous as the two flag bearers were considered the most favorites, and being talked about by the media and the electorates.

The study is, therefore, guided by two research questions:

- (a) What are the transitivity distributions in the manifestos of Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Peter Gregory Onwubuasi Obi?
- (b) What are the patterns and their implications?

Previous Studies on Political Manifestos

Quite several studies on political manifestos have been carried out on the shoulders of research giants. It is remarkable to state that some of these studies stem from Europe, Asia and Africa.

In Europe, for instance, an allusion is made to: (Chryssochoou & Volpato, 2004; Dobson, 2007; and Vogler, 2022). Chryssochoou and Volpato (2004) seek to analyze the communist manifesto in France, focusing on the social influence and the power of the minorities. They adopted a social psychological model of social influence and arrived at three findings: (a) The statement of a world vision that suggests a system of classification that objects to power dynamics and produces many points of influence and conflict (b) building the minority's identity as a specific group that is a subset but a representative of the population that is the focus of influence (c) The development and maintenance of antagonistic relationships with the powerful majority group. According to the researchers, these would prevent minority from being seen as deviants, but they would create the impression of being seen as equal to the majority and even paint a picture that the minority is capable of throwing the majority from power. Dobson (2007) researched a textual representation of a political paradigm shift of two election manifestos, using a Critical Discourse Analysis approach. The study was situated with two research questions: (a) How does each party's leader's language reflect their own and the party's political stance during election? (b) To what extent does each party's leader's discourse utilize other texts within their own? The findings revealed that: one, Blair's verbal choices entwined his personal beliefs that he stands for, in the party's manifesto; two, Blair's language choices portray the degree of which political debate has transformed. Vogler (2022) studied parties' manifestos during German federal elections to find out the role tourism plays in parties' manifestos. Even though Vogler's study is mainly on tourism, it is worthwhile to talk about, as it mirrors this study. He concluded that tourism in political manifestos is discussed thoroughly.

In Asia, I make references to (Malghani, Akhtar & Farooqi, 2019, Zhao et al., 2017).

Malghani et al. (2019) analyzed political Discourse in Pakistani Party Manifestos. They underpinned their research with a triangulated theoretical framework. Thus, Van Dijk's

(1998) Socio-Cognitive Model, with a support of Turner and Tajfel's (1979) Social identity approach and Budge & Farlie's Salience theory (1983). They bring to bear that the political parties they under-studied employed discursive strategies in their manifestos to project a positive image for themselves and the party as a whole. Zhao et al. (2017) looked into a transitivity analysis of American President Donald J. Trump's inaugural address. The researchers found material processes (68.6%) dominating the other process types (Relational processes (15.7%) being the second in position, followed by existential processes (6.4%), behavioral processes (5.0%) and mental processes (3.6%), whereas verbal processes (0.7%).

In Africa, these scholars (Ehineni, 2014; Afful & Gyasi, 2020; Nartey & Yankson, 2014; Ikechukwu-Ibe, Adjei et al., 2015) undertook some pertinent studies on political manifestos. Ehineni (2014), using a Critical Discourse analysis, examined the modals in Nigerian political manifestos. The result has it that the politicians in the two manifestos used the modals: will, shall, must, can and others to persuade, to oblige, to make promises, to demonstrate commitment, to solicit support and to manipulate their electorates. In his study, modal verbs are essential linguistic elements used discursively to construct ideologies. Afful and Gyasi (2020) examined the schematic structure of manifesto launch speeches of three political parties. In their studies, they employed Swalesean rhetorical move analysis and found nine obligatory moves, as: 'stating purpose, acclaiming, and criticizing; and four ambiguous moves such as defending, revering departed souls, forming alliance, and solidarizing'. Nartey and Yankson (2014) whose study is similar to Ehineni (2014) focused their study on the use of auxiliary verbs in the manifesto of a Ghanaian political party. They ascertained that modal auxiliary verbs, especially 'will' was used predominantly to make promise, obligation and necessity in lieu of influencing the electorates. Ikechukwu-Ibe et al. (2021) researched into pragmatic analysis of Presidential campaign manifestos of Muhammadu Buhari and Donald Trump, with Paul Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle theory. The result of their finding indicated that 'both Presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Donald Trump observed the conversational maxim of quality at some point in their presidential campaign speech promises on security, job creation and health care, but violated it at some other point'. Considering the study of Adjei et al. (2015), they focused on state-of-the-nation address in Ghana, even though it is not a political manifesto, (just like the study of Zhao et al. (2017). It is important to look into their study, as their research theoretical framework is (in effect) similar to this present study. The ultimate objective of their study was to find out the major process types in the 2009 state-of-the-nation address in Ghana. They revealed material process types (which recorded 59.14%) to have dominated the other processes, while the mental processes had a record of 14.37%.

From the literature reviewed, it is evident that several studies have been conducted on inaugural addresses, debates and political manifestos using various linguistic approaches. However, there is a paucity of studies on political manifestos from an SFL perspective. This paper addresses this gap by performing a transitivity analysis of the manifestos of two Nigerian presidential candidates.

Theoretical Framework

The present study dwells on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory. In Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics 'language seems to have evolved for three major purposes: 1. to talk about what is happening, what will happen and what has happened, 2. to interact and/or to express a point of view, 3. to turn the output of the previous two functions into a coherent whole' (Butt et al., 2003, P. 5). Inarguably, it cannot be again said the role of language is (extremely) important, and cannot be overemphasized, as it serves as the main instrument for evaluation in the present study.

Given the tenet of SFL, it must be stated that language plays three major functions, which serve as a point of convergence for which grammar operates in the language system. These functions (ideational/experiential, interpersonal and textual) are also known as meta-functions (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Ideational function concerns using language to describe our experience of the world, including all that goes on in our minds and to define events and state the entities involved in them (Thompson, 2013). In SFL, 'language, therefore, represents external reality by happenings and states, which are referred to as Processes; entities, known as Participants and circumstances in which the happenings and states occur, which are referred to as Circumstances' (Ammara et al., 2019).

Halliday (1994) put the processes of transitivity into six categories: material process, mental process, behavioral process, relational process, verbal process and existential process. Halliday (1987, 1994, 2005) explains the various processes as:

1. Material Process or the process of doing, construes doings and happenings including actions, activities, and events. A material clause is made of these participants: Actor+ Goal (Recipient) and Process+ Range. There is always an Actor, which can be realized by a nominal item and (even) a non-finite clause. There are other ways to tell whether the process is 'directed', in which case there is a Goal. For example: The man (actor) killed (material process) the thief (goal). If the process is directed, it may be 'benefactive', and where there is one, it is considered a Recipient. For example. The judge (Actor) gave (Process) the demonstrator (Recipient) a document (Goal)].
2. The mental process interprets sensing, perception, cognition, intention, and emotion; formations of a process of consciousness involve a participant endowed with consciousness and typically a participant entering into or created by that consciousness, its component follows Process+ Senser+ Phenomenon. In a mental process, there is a Senser, which is realized by a nominal item denoting a being endowed with consciousness (e.g. she in 'She saw them crossing the road'). It is much more constrained than the Actor and (in fact) the most constrained of all the participants in any of the process types.
3. The relational process serves to characterize and identify. If the 'material' process is concerned with our experience of the material world and the 'mental' process is concerned with our experience of the world of our consciousness, both outer experience and this inner experience may be construed by relational processes, but

they model this experience as 'being' or 'having' rather than as 'doing' or 'sensing'. They are concerned with the relationship set up between two things or concepts, e.g. 'Edward is clever', 'Mary is the doctor'. Relational processes are expressed in two modes: 'attributive' and 'identifying'. In the attributive mode, an Attribute is ascribed to some entity (carrier), while in the Identifying mode, one entity (identifier) is used to identify another (identified). In the example, Edward is clever; Edward is the Carrier; the verb 'is' signifies an Attribute Relational Process and clever is the Attribute. Nonetheless, in the example, Mary is the doctor, Mary is the identified element, she represents an identifying Relational process, and the doctor is the identifier.

4. Behavioral Processes are processes of physiological and psychological behavior, like smiling, coughing, laughing, breathing, etc. They often have one participant as the Behaver. For example: Foster grinned lightly. Behavioral processes are found between material and mental processes, where the Behaver is usually a conscious being, like the Sensor, but the process functions more like one of 'doing'.
5. Verbal Processes are (also) known as processes of 'saying' of any kind. It shields 'any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning', in Halliday's terms (1986, p.129) 'like the notice tells you to keep quiet or my watch says it's half past ten.' The verbalization, in other words, the message itself is termed as 'verbiage' and the participants who are involved are the 'sayer', (the one who disseminates/gives/sends out the message) while the 'Receiver', is the addressee or the one to whom the message is being addressed. For instance: Miriam (sayer) told (verbal process) me (receiver) a story (verbiage).
6. Existential Processes demonstrate that something exists or happens. They often used the words **there is** in clauses, thus, they appear in subject positions. Some typical verbs used in existential clauses include 'be', 'exist', 'arise' and others that express existence. The nominal group that follows these verbs is called 'Existent'.

The choice for this theory in the study is to aid in accounting for how meanings and linguistic implicatures are negotiated in texts and political manifestos.

Method

The dataset for this study comprises the 2023 manifestos of two Nigerian presidential candidates: Peter Gregory Onwubuasi Obi of the Labor Party and Bola Ahmed Tinubu of All Progressive Congress. The manifestos were sourced from the internet. Touching on memory lane and a brief character sketch, Peter Obi, for example, was with the PDP political party, until 2022 when he crossed the carpet to join the Labor party. He is a known businessman and had served as a governor of Anambra state, from 2006 to 2014. The Nigerians believe that he is a man of integrity and possesses the capacity to change the face of the country. In the case of Tinubu, he is known as a political godfather and has also served as a governor for a time. Some critics of Nigeria have accused him of having meddled with corruption and among other things he could have done right, as at the time he was a governor. His party, APC, is currently in power and he is expected to win the next election. The choice of these two presidential candidates' manifestos for the

present study is relevant, as the two were considered the most favorites to win the elections.

There is therefore the need to critically examine and interpret the processes of transitivity in the candidates' manifestos to determine their linguistic inferences.

Results and Discussion

To analyze the data, I first read the two manifestos severally to familiarize myself with the contents. Next, I examined the string of words from the clausal level based on Halliday's (1971) principle of calculating clauses, where due diligence was paid to the finite clauses at the expense of non-finite clauses. I then calculated the various process types and assigned to them their required frequencies and percentages. Lastly, I elaborated on the process types in the manifestos in their thematic categories.

The results have been presented below, followed by a discussion.

Table 1. Transitivity in Obi's and Tinubu's 2023 manifesto

Speech	Total Number	Material Process	Mental Process	Relational Process	Behavioral Process	Verbal Process	Existential Process
Obi	No.	222	163	22	36	0	0
	%	100%	73.4%	9.9%	16.2%	0	0
Tinubu	No.	129	114	06	09	0	0
	%	100%	88.4%	4.6%	6.9%	0	0

As can be seen from the table 1, a total number of two hundred and twenty-two (222) process types are used in Obi's manifesto and one hundred and twenty-nine processes are found in Tinubu's manifesto, respectively. In Obi's manifesto, the most frequently used process is material, recording one hundred and sixty -three (163) representing 73.4%. In the same vein, Tinubu's manifesto has a material process of one hundred and fourteen (114), representing 84.4% marking the highest process type in his manifesto. The second highest process in Obi and Tinubu's manifestos is the relational process. Obi recorded thirty-six representing 16.2% and Tinubu recorded nine marking 6.9%.

The third one in place in Obi's manifesto is twenty-two representing 9.9% for the mental process. The mental process in Tinubu's manifesto is six, marking 4.6%. The other minor process types in the two manifestos recorded zero, except for the existential process in Obi's manifesto which recorded one, representing 0.5%. For this discussion, only the three major types of processes will be discussed to establish what the two candidates have annotated in their manifestos for the citizens. They are discussed as follows:

The Quest to Liberate Nigeria

According to Halliday (1994), material process describes the doings or actions by participants. The two key participants in the material process are the actor and goal. The actor is the agent that is usually the subject and the goal is the direct object of an action-

oriented verb. In analyzing the material process in this study, I name the material process as 'm' in codifying the numbers.

In Obi's manifesto, he used as many as one hundred and sixty-three material processes, dominating the other process types, making this one confirm the most frequent material process types in the studies of Adjei et al. (2015) and Zhao et al. (2017).

The large use of material processes in Obi's manifesto exclusively suggests to Nigerians his plans and all that he will be doing to extricate the country from its mess. Evidence of this can be found in the excerpts below:

M1. We (**actor**) will save (**material**) Nigeria (**goal**) from the slide (**circumstance**), and we (**actor**) will create (**material**) prosperity and unity (**goal**) through exemplary leadership (**circumstance**).

M2. We (**actor**) will deal (**material**) decisively with insecurity (**goal**) by putting (**material**) a permanent end (**goal**) to the incessant banditry, insurgency, kidnaping and cross-border terrorism in our country today (**circumstance**).

M3. We (**actor**) will undertake (**material**) institutional reforms (**goal**) to secure Nigerians (**goal**).

M17. We (**actor**) will implement (**material**) radical economic policies (**goal**) that will drastically reduce our debt- servicing ratio and debt to revenue ratio (**circumstance**).

M29. We (**actor**) shall aggressively prioritize (**material**) the mechanization of the huge endowment of arable land (**goal**) across our nation, particularly in our Northern region (**circumstance**)

M33. We (**actor**) will introduce (**material**) a mandatory "No Child left behind" educational policy (**goal**).

M77. We (**actor**) will provide (**material**) health insurance cover (**goal**) to 133 million poorest Nigerians including pregnant women, children, the aged and the disabled (**circumstance**).

M81. We (**actor**) will deploy (**material**) available national resources (**goal**) combined with extant policies and programmes to tackle and reduce the high rate of youth unemployment (**circumstance**)

M84. We (**actor**) will address (**material**) the gaps (**goal**) in the legislation guiding the funding access modalities to Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) (**circumstantial**)

(Obi's manifesto)

The lexicons '*save*', '*deal*', '*undertake*', '*implement*', '*introduce*', '*address*' in the material clause suggest the speaker's resilient impetus envisioned to liberate the country. Aside, the speaker's engagement of the actor 'we' and the modal 'will' in the process of doing epitomizes their communal determination and willingness to their course of action. As noted by Adjei et al. (2015), the actor 'we' in the manifesto is ideologically representational. Thus, it validates 'the pronoun 'we' is used by politicians to show a collective responsibility, in which case the inclusion of the audience is no exception' (Dickson, 2023, P.17). The speaker, having used the inclusive 'we' more often, presumes to illuminate himself in consolidation with his officials and followers to be responsible of the task of liberating the country from all manner of destitutions and bedlams. In a

contrariwise, the speaker will not be held responsible should they fail to live up to their mandate.

Also, as stability is key for the progress of every country, the speaker and his allies have tied up the (manner) adverb 'decisively' in modification of the material in excerpt M2, to exemplify their priority and reinforcement on security.

Further, the speaker's notion in extract M77 presupposes that every nation's success dwells on the health of the youths. Obi and his associates conceal (themselves) behind the process of doing to ensure the citizens who are financially impoverished (including pregnant women, children, the aged and the disabled) get insured to enjoy free medical care. In their quest, the array of issues espoused is considered valuable and cogent to give a new aspiration and new expectation among the people to better their lives and improve their standard of living (Selamat & Hanif, 2021).

Promise of Restoring Systems

In his manifesto, Tinubu alienates on one hundred and fourteen (114) material processes. He leverages on the material process to make promises of restoring systems that appear to be quiescent. The excerpts below are evidence:

M7. I (**actor**) will embark (**material process**) on a comprehensive revamping and modernization of the nation's security architecture (**circumstance**) to meet the country's needs during this period.

M8. I (**actor**) will urgently review (**material process**) the management (**goal**) and pay (**material process**) structure (**goal**) of the five security services- federal police, the army, the navy, the airforce, and the intelligence services (**circumstance**).

M16. I (**actor**) will revive (**material process**) technical and vocational education (**goal**) across the country (**circumstance**) by establishing (material process) Local Technical Institute (**goal**) in all the states of the federation (**circumstance**).

M96. I (**actor**) will revive and relaunch (**material process**) the National Health Insurance Scheme (**goal**), ensure that it takes (**material process**) off smoothly, and provide (**material process**) health insurance cover (**goal**) for most Nigerians (**circumstance**).

M99. I(**actor**) will promote (**material process**) the creation of a new set of young agric- entrepreneurs (**goal**) by encouraging and supporting young school leavers to take into agriculture after undergoing vocational training at the various schools of agriculture (**circumstance**)

(Tinubu's manifesto)

Tinubu's linguistic choices, for example, 'review', 'revamping', 'revive', 'promote' are reflections of his thought of restoring various systems. Relatively, just like Obi using 'we' frequently as the actor in his manifesto, Tinubu inversely engrosses 'I' in the actor position to advocate that he is the man in authority and will be in charge and take blames of affairs in the material process (of doing). His stance, discursively, supplements unwavering subjectivity to his speech; given him a personal voice to exercise obligation (Addy & Ofori, 2020), that he is required to perform.

In the excerpts M7 and M8, for instance, he foregrounded himself behind the material process to revitalize and fortify the various security systems in Nigeria. The proficient use of the modal 'will' mirrors the findings of Ehineni (2014) and Nartey & Yankson (2014), as to persuade, oblige, make promises and demonstrate commitment; to the tasks conceptualized in the world of the speaker. The speaker's ideology on this discursal scenery is congruent with the opposition candidate, as both (of them) are citizens and aware of happenings that are battling the country's progress, peace and stability.

Manifestos allow political parties and leaders to articulate policies and programs with a freshness of vision, a boldness of intent, a clarity of purpose and a renewed sense of determination (Singh & Bala, 2018). In fulfilment of policies and programs in his manifesto, Tinubu, in excerpt M16, is committed to titivating and establishing more technical and vocational schools across the country. He thinks that doing so will enable young people to acquire useful skills and better prepare for the future. The claim, in excerpt M16, rationalizes the thought that many students graduate from school without any prospects for them. As part of his manifesto, he aims to change the narrative by providing more opportunities for training and development. In the material clause, he promises to resuscitate the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) that appears to no longer be functioning. He deems to give it a new face all altogether, as he is in action to insure every Nigerian enjoys free medical health care across the various states, excerpt M96.

In excerpt M99, he strengthens his thought to support young graduates who will be completing vocational and technical institutes to venture into agriculture. He remains insistent that it is the surest way to make life bearable for the young ones.

Crusade for Financial Freedom

The mental process is also known as process of sensing. It deals with the experiences of the world of our consciousness. With clauses of sensing, they construe activities taking place in our consciousness. In this function, there is always a participant who is human, known as senser, i.e., the one who senses- feels, thinks, wants, and perceives (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). For example; Sami likes money. In a grammatical term, the participant who is involved in a mental process is often pronominally referred to as he, she not it, just like the noun item in the example. Generally, mental processes allow us to gain an insight into the feelings or state of mind of certain participants. The speaker, Obi, used twenty-two mental processes in his manifesto representing 9.9%. Some of these mental clauses include:

MP10. We (**senser**) want (**mental process**) to end the race to extreme poverty (**phenomenon**)

MP14. We (**senser**) want (**mental process**) to heal Nigeria (**phenomenon**)

MP15. We (**senser**) are determined (**mental process**) to do everything that needs to be done to reverse the curse and lead our beloved country to prosperity, freedom and security (**phenomenon**)

MP17. We (**senser**) share (**mental process**) the pains of Nigerian citizens everywhere (**phenomenon**)

(Obi's manifesto)

In the excerpts: MP7, MP10, and MP14, the speaker, having collectively identified themselves as 'we' in the senser role, in connection with the mental process, has recognized the appalling state of the country that needs to be redeemed, at all costs. The lexical item 'poverty' being qualified as 'extreme poverty', projects the country as totally insolvent and yonder repairs. The speaker likened it to the term 'curse'; to suggests that Nigeria's financial stability goes beyond putting physical measures, but also a spiritual road map that needs to be embarked upon to exonerate the country's financial sector. As admitted in the cognizance of the senser, the country has suffered financial suppression making the citizens wallop in abject poverty for years, henceforward the speaker and his administration have contrived in mental toughness to go at all lengths to set the country in financial freedom (so in effect, all that are reckoned as curses will be cast away).

Showing Social Solidarity with the Citizens

MP17. We (**senser**) share (**mental process**) the pains of Nigerian citizens everywhere (**phenomenon**)

MP19. We (**senser**) hear (**mental process**) Nigerians' stories of deprivation and degradation (**phenomenon**)

MP21. We (**senser**) know (**mental process**) that the problem is not ethnicity or religion, the problem is not geography, the problem is not the weather (**phenomenon**)

(Obi's manifesto)

Social solidarity is a divine force that unites people, raising awareness of the importance of living together, caring for each other, and helping each other, rather than being divided and hostile towards one another (Selamat & Hanif, 2021). The speaker dexterously employs his linguistic adroitness by establishing camaraderie with the Nigerian people and shares his sympathy and awareness of their situations. The lexical categories 'pains', 'share', 'hear' are used to heighten the emotional connection with the people. He confirms in MP17 and MP19 "*We (**senser**) share (**mental process**) the pains of Nigerian citizens everywhere (**phenomenon**)", *We (**senser**) hear (**mental process**) Nigerians' stories of deprivation and degradation (**phenomenon**)*". In a mental process, the senser conceptualizes (the unthinkable nature and) the ineptitude of the Nigerian leaders to have been responsible for the country's woes, excerpt MP21.*

Plans to Establish Industries

Contrasting Obi's usage of twenty-two mental processes, Tinubu used six, marginally lower than the opposition candidate, to unequivocally make his plans on jobs; as indicated in his manifesto:

MP2. I (**senser**) will focus (**mental process**) on stimulating jobs (**phenomenon**)

MP4. I (**senser**) will launch a new National Industrial Policy that will focus (**mental process**) on special intervention to reinvigorate specific strategic industries (**phenomenon**)

MP5. The Federal Government (**senser**) will focus (**mental process**) on efforts in exploration, research and development (**phenomenon**).

(Tinubu's manifesto)

In the excerpt MP2, for example, the senger is mentally obsessed with plans to establish jobs for the millions of Nigerian youths. In the subsequent clauses, the speaker deems to seek consensus and to elaborate policy (Ornatowski, 2012), thus, to unveil a new National Industrial Policy which aims at re-enforcing industries such as oil and gas, textiles, cement and others that appear to be dormant. His thoughts on this, incontrovertibly, will make the economy of the country more vibrant and potent for businesses to flourish. I agree that the country's dominant population is the youths and jobs are the major glitches pushing most of the citizens to travel outside the country, to search for greener pastures. In the world of the senger, he considers this a worrying situation that needs an exigent solution.

A Call for Good Leadership

The relational process is generally known as the process of being and having. It (more often) seeks to classify and identify. Those that are identifying are said to be reversible, in which case, we say that *x* and *a* are switchable. For example, *Dorothy is the teacher*. This can be recast as *The teacher is Dorothy*. The classifying or the attributive ones cannot be reversed *Dorothy is happy*. This cannot be written as *happy is Dorothy*. Also, in the attributive mode, the attribute is assigned an entity as 'carrier', while in the identifying mode, one entity is known as the identifier. In this example *Foster is clever*, Foster is the Carrier. In this case, Dorothy is the teacher; Dorothy is considered the identified person in the relational process, so she is the identifier. Most often, the identifying process contains two participants (Token and Value) with their identifiable verbs as *become*, *have*, *be*, etc.

In Obi's manifesto, he engages thirty-six (36) relational processes. He used some of these clauses to canvass for good leadership as in the following:

RP4: About 63% of Nigerians (133m) (**carrier**) are (**intensive relational process**) so poor that they do not have access to basic sanitation, good nutrition, basic education and health care, or employment (**attribute**).

RP6: Nigeria failed to realize its potentials because her leaders (**carrier**) are (**intensive relational process**) mostly incompetent (**attributive**).

RP9: We (**carrier**) are (**intensive relational process**) different a different breed (**attributive**) and we are connected to the people.

RP10: We (**carrier**) are (**intensive relational process**) honest, competent, humble and determined (**attribute**) to lock hands together with Nigerians and rebuild our economy.

RP14: The problem (**carrier**) is (**intensive relational process**) leadership (**attribute**).

(Obi's manifesto)

The word '*poor*' as used in RP4 suggests its intensive relationship with the carrier (Nigerians). Accordingly, it conveys the degree to which poverty has married the average number of Nigerians, making them heavy-laden in every aspect of their social lives. The speaker portrays this as the lukewarm attitude of the leaders who have (since time immemorial) been in the carrier positions, failing to live up to expectations, due to gross

incompetence and impunity, excerpt RP6. Obi overtly annexes himself, in this instance, to be the right man to assume the carrier role to carry (all) the loads Nigerians are burdened with; and to provide all that it takes to make the lives of Nigerians comfortable. In excerpt RP9, for instance, he uses a positive representation, where the pronominal item 'we' is used in the carrier position to let Nigerians recognize that he and the leadership are not like those that have been at the helm of affairs over the years and have not done anything for the citizens. He aligns himself and the party to be capable of the task and will be answerable to the citizens. He reiterates, time again, Nigeria's problems must not be attributed to anything, but solely leadership; for national leaders must take a stand (Langseth & Pope, 1997). In an illocution, he appeals to the Nigerian people to vote him and the party to lead the country. He is certain the leadership qualities of the party's top officials and the party's policies (Eder et al., 2017) are profound enough to be reliant on. He alludes to himself and his leadership as holding integrity and are reckoned the best, for they are honest, competent as well as accountable to lead the people, excerpt RP10.

In the case of Tinubu, he used nine (9) relational processes in his manifesto. Excerpts of these can be found below:

RP3. There (**carrier**) will be (**intensive relational process**) a renewed focus on Agriculture and food security by formulating a new National Policy on Agriculture (**attribute**)...

RP6. My administration (**carrier**) will be (**intensive relational process**) anchored on a growth-oriented...(attribute)

(Tinubu's manifesto)

Tinubu has made numerous plans and stated them through various means.

In the relational clause in excerpt RP3, he recapitulates one of those plans to underscore how passionate he is about the country, particularly the agriculture sector. The speaker's intention in RP3 sheds light on the notion that Nigeria has a dense population, making food security so crucial for the survival of the nation. It adds that his administration, being the carrier of the intensive relational process in the excerpt RP6, is a goal-achieving oriented one and (it) is ensuring that all other plans the government is putting in place will yield results, positively.

Implications of Transitivity Distributions in The Candidates' Manifestos

As noticed in Table 1 above, Obi recorded the highest frequencies in the three major process types more than Tinubu. Obi's outrageous numbers used in the three major process types imply that his government has been in opposition for quite a long time. Consequently, there is the need for him and his government to say a lot to market themselves and also convince the electorates to vote him and his party to power. The speaker's impression suggests that there is so much to do for the citizens, hence he uses more of the material processes as he is bent on doing abundant on education, security, health, agriculture and the economy.

Given the manifesto of Tinubu, he used fewer of the three major process types to demonstrate that his government has been in power for quite a time and he is expected to win the mandate of the people to continue the good work. He has confidence that the evidence of his government's work is glaring, so there is no need to go loquacious, for the works will speak for themselves. He similarly used the major process types, especially more of the mental process, to climax his plans on education, security, health, agriculture and the economy, to reflect the promises in the campaign manifestos in the study of Ikechukwu-Ibe et al. (2021).

The two candidates have used the process types proficiently to exemplify their plans for the country, as they are Nigerians and aware of the country's problems.

Conclusion

This study has examined the manifestos of two Nigerian presidential candidates from an SFL perspective. The findings revealed that Obi's frequencies in the major process types supersede those of Tinubu. The study affirms that Obi, whose government has been in opposition for a very long time, needed to speak more, exclusively in the material process, to persuade and demonstrate commitment to the electorates. He made good use of the major process types (material, mental and relational) in his quest to liberate Nigeria, to demonstrate social solidarity with the citizens and call for good leadership. His opponent, Tinubu, whose government was in power before the elections spoke less possibly because he thought the work of his government should be palpable to the electorates. He (most often) capitalized on the mental process as a trajectory for restoring systems, crusading for financial freedom and establishing industries. The findings also revealed that the candidates used the pronouns 'I' and 'We' for ideological effect.

For instance, Obi used the inclusive pronoun 'We' in the material process to suggest that he and his party would be responsible for the progress and development of Nigeria. Conversely, Tinubu employed the first-person pronoun 'I' to demonstrate that he has the knowledge, experience and capability to continue to lead Nigeria to the Promised Land. Unsurprisingly, the manifestos of both candidates highlighted relevant areas (education, security, health, agriculture and the economy) in the country that need urgent attention. The study, with insight from transitivity, has provided a linguistic perspective on political discourse, demonstrating how linguistic choices in manifestos reflect the social and political intentions of political leaders. This study serves as a background for political scientists and discourse analysts to appreciate how meanings are entrenched in political manifestos.

The data for the study is limited. It recommends that a future study, where a larger corpus, with a different theoretical approach, is required to better understand how linguistic implications are rooted in political manifestos.

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