

## **Chatham House of Interest and the Discourse of Globalised Political Expressions in Peter Obi's 2023 Pre-election Speech**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Chatham House, for the reason of its royalty, institutionalism and independence, has become a global beehive and platform where, especially Nigerian political actors articulate their ambitions and policies and prove the mettle of their deservedness for the nation's helmsman's job. Extant political discourse studies have largely examined conventional campaign speech-situations with stint considerations for political expressions offered on the postmodern globalised campaign platforms. This study, therefore, investigated Peter Obi's Chatham House speech (POCHS) with a view to examining the contextually referenced discursive strategies that project Nigerian presidential candidacy as more of offshore interest in the twenty-first century global politics. Martin and White's Appraisal Theory was used as the framework in analysing the elemental linguistic and non-linguistic strategies deployed in the electronically sourced POCHS. The data, processed into analysable extract-units, were subjected to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Mr. Peter Obi's (PO) unusual employment of attitude-demonstrated 'affect', 'appreciation' and 'judgement' was unique in relating his global audience to virtues and attributes that qualify him for the Nigerian topmost position, presenting him as an unconventional politician. Positive and negative appreciation and judgements were used for personal-self-evaluation, corporate-self-evaluation, 'others-self-evaluation', and nation-self-evaluation while the bases for appreciation and judgement were personal and party competence, problems, policy gaps and solutions. PO deployed engagement as monogloss and heterogloss on top of 'graduation' with intensifiers and quantifiers as force that projected 'focus', 'emphasis' and 'analogies'. Thus, globalised political context influenced PO's exploitation of the rarely available global platforms (Chatham House) to articulate his political ambition and manifesto. Language is, therefore, revealed as dynamic force for presentation and evaluation of persons, problems, policies and panaceas that are capable of endearing him to the expectation of the audience at Chatham House, pointing to Nigerian presidency as a phenomenon of 21<sup>st</sup> century's global interest.*

**KEYWORDS:** Chatham house, appraisal, political campaign speech, political discourse platform, Nigerian 2023 election

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## INTRODUCTION

The global trend in contemporary politics is the engagement of the politicians with the electorate through townhall meetings, symposium and one-on-one contact interactions. In the Nigerian political space, the period of campaign is said to be the busiest for the politicians as they go from place to place, state to state trying to establish contact with electorates. However, their understanding of McLuhan's concept of "the world as a global village" orientates them towards attracting seeking global legitimacy which can happen when the supports of the first world nations and interests are adequately rallied. This is the basis for which candidate now patronise Chatham House, where they engage with local-foreign audience. In most cases, the goal of such endeavours is, aligning with van Dijk (2006) notion of discourse and power, to 'influence'. Power in this case is taken for influence, which implies the ability to influence people's (electorate) choice and preference, ultimately claiming their mandate. Pondering questions to this effect include, how is language deployed by political agents, especially candidates in electioneering campaign in order to rally the supports of the global political community which Chatham house epitomises, and what appear to be the significant rhetorical features of the campaign speeches, especially as they affect international appearance?

It is Feldman and Landtsheer (1998) opinion that communication with people is an imperative part of politics. Such position is found apt because politicians must engage with people throughout the process of the political aspirations. Serious minded politicians, particularly, presidential candidates tend to go where their voices would be heard and have their popularity enhance. This is legitimisation in its own right before engaging in rhetorical legitimisation (Cap, 2013). In such political gathering or events, language use becomes an incredibly indispensable factor in shaping, not only the issues that are used to underscore legitimisation of the political candidate, but also to foreground the discourse structure of the political sphere. Hence, the significant influence of this research is the examination of the language forms that are used for legitimisation as well as marking political events and scene; and in this case, the appearance of a presidential candidate in Chatham House. Claeys (2010) posits that in any location, or on any platform that politicians speak, there is the foregrounding of political language, which is conceptualised in this study as the use of language to influence people or exert the political will to decide who gets what from the limited resources (Laswell, 1949). How are these manifested in the Chatham house political discourse of 2023 between and among political office seekers? What are the discursive style of presidential candidates appearing before the global audience in Chatham house? These, and other such questions are the major concerns in this research.

Another significant notion that arouses interest in this research is found in Schaffner (1996), which implies that every political speech has replicable features, since it exists or belong to the same subgenre, and share the same resources with other political texts. Schaffner (1996) submits that though political settings may differ, there are replicated structures, ideology and

engagement, which may be mutually inclusive of rhetorical persuasive elements/features. What is implied here is that political communication is used to achieve the same goals. Another important point to note is that irrespective of the setting, political communication has replicated norms, nature and features that pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, discourse and even stylistic analysis can unfold. This present study employed critical discourse and pragmatic analyses, for the purpose of critically dissecting and evaluating the replicable features of political speeches made at Chatham House on the basis of globalised nuances and norms.

### **Chatham house and the concept of institutionalised global politics**

Chatham House, also known as The Royal Institute of International Affairs, is an independent policy institute with headquarters in London. Its stated mission is to provide commentary on world events and offer solutions to global challenges. This led to the formulation of the Chatham House rule, which is premised on helping governments and societies to build a sustainably secure, prosperous and just world. The platform encourages interactive models to enable experts and policymakers to visualize the complex international system. In other words, Chatham House brings together in a common place experts and policymakers to interrogate specific policy decisions might have consequences and far-reaching positive impacts on democracies and programmes around the world. This is why Chatham House now enjoys some level of patronage by especially, the Nigerian presidential candidates, though Adekoya (2023) views this as Nigerian politicians seeking global endorsement from former colonial masters.

### **Important scholarly task**

Studies on political speeches have identified the semantic, stylistic and pragmatic features of inaugural or ceremonial or other forms of campaign speeches by political office holders or aspirants. Oduola and Adeagbo (2019) study examined the discursivity of campaign posters of 2015 and 2019 on major newspapers in Nigeria, using Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts, and Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal discourse approach. The pivot of the study was to interpret the pragmatic acts in the texts accompanying the images. This present study differs in both areas of scope and theory. Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) examined traits of victory in inaugural speeches of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, while Akinkuolere (2015) applied lexical analysis in the study of inaugural speech. The speech in this present study is different from the ones in the studies above in the sense that it is a pre-election speech, while the ones in Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) and Akinkuolere (2015) are post-election speeches. Aboh (2016) deployed sociolinguistics as framework to evaluate Jega's speeches during the 2015 Nigeria's general election, which is a clear departure in the field of political discourse. Most studies focus on the political actors themselves, without concern for the umpire, whose speeches and activities even affect electoral processes. Osisanwo (2017) evaluated pragmatic resources in President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech, with particular focus on the pragmatic goals. Similarly, Osisanwo and Chinaguh (2018) worked on the communicative purposes of language in presidential concession speeches, using Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria and John Mahama of Ghana as bases. Akinmameji (2018) carried out a stylistic analysis of two

political speeches which were delivered by Vice-President Osibanjo with a view to discussing persuasive styles of the political actors. The above studies notwithstanding, exploring speeches delivered by Nigerian political actors on a global stages such as Chatham House to underscore their qualifications for presidency and legitimise their candidature remains a scholarly ‘virgin land’. Examining the discursive dynamics of the pragmatic features and forms in globalised political discourse, Peter Obi's Chatham House Speech, for instance, is, therefore, a step in the right direction. It is, therefore, a crucial task in this study is to explore if the physical context of Chatham House affects the discourse structures and features of presidential candidates’ speeches, using Mr Peter Obi as a case study.

### **The nexus of discourse and politics in the literature**

The indispensable relationship between language and politics is not in doubt. Broadly, language is a semiotic system, not only in description as a system of signs (Halliday, 1985), but also as the main resource for meaning. In other words, language is how people make sense of the world and things around them. Language is at the interface of representations and meaning, what Ferdinand de Saussure refers to as the signifier and signified. The meaning potential of language can be seen or transferred to all intricacies of human relationship, including politics and society. Language is bidirectionally used by interactants who have either preconceived notion or shared knowledge of the variables of the communication process (Bach and Harnish, 1992; Brown and Levenson, 1987).

In the political space, language is used for multifarious functions by politicians (in-group) and the people (out-group), who are participants in political discourse. Dunmire (2012) refers to these two groups as ‘enterprise’ and ‘nominal’, stating that these two interact on the basis of power and discourse. While the former use language to enact power and control, the latter respond to power and dominance in certain ways, using language (van Dijk, 1997). Gonçalves (2018) argues that the communication chain between the politicians and the people is bridged by media, and the propensity of communication is enhanced by liberal democracy, or freedom of speech. Political language, like any other subject, contains a variety of phrases, jargons, and slogans that are employed to further or achieve certain political objectives. Politicians use rhetorical language that is dense with features like allusion, metaphor, and repetition (Atkinson, 2005) as persuasive or manipulative strategies to encourage people to engage in political behaviours or to exert their political will.

The importance of language in political situations can be reinforced by discourse approach. In other words, discourse analysis remains an integral part of language with the realm of politics or power; it is used to explicate and unravel hidden facts and figures that underline political communication or interaction between and among political agents. Snape and Spencer (2003) opine that discourse is the examination of the way knowledge is produced within different discourses, as well as the performances of acts in discourses with a gamut of linguistic and rhetorical devices. Relating it to political talk, in simple term, discourse deals with the

organisation of text and the basic or complex features of communication to exercise control and to project political ideology. Canonical scholars such as Fairclough (1989), Wodak (1992) and van Dijk (2004) particularise the analysis of political discourse as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with the caveat that it primarily focuses on the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted in (by) text and talk in social and political contexts. Dunmire (2012) describes political discourse analysis as a way of ‘critiquing’ political roles with respect to ‘producing, maintaining, abusing, and resisting power in contemporary society’. What this implies is that the language of politics is critical, even before its eventual description by the canonical discourse scholars. On the one hand, language pushes out power roles, while on the other hand, it can be used to resist it.

Okulska and Cap (2010) interchanges the term as “analysis of political discourse” (APD), with particular conception on the involvement social-contextual orientations or factors. This view has gained traction among discourse scholars, because there is no form of human communication that is not hinged on social factors, even though they are specifically situated with particular genres, in this case political issues. The basis for describing it this way is that politics cannot be ‘extricated from the society, and every discourse on the ‘polity and/or politics’, are situated – located at the intersection of political - public discourse and political/social institutions’ (Luke, 2002; Chilton, 2004). Putting this into perspective, it will appear that political discourse can be treated as both an extension or a reinforcement of public (social) interaction, only that it pays more attention to power relations, how it is perceived, legitimised, or even resisted. Blommaert (1997) puts it clearer, describing it as the ‘interplay between language and politics’ and the awareness generated by political actions or inactions, and how it affects group of people. In relation to the focus of this research, political discourse can be conceptualised as how politicians use language and discourse forms to legitimise claim to power or to express one form of hegemony or the other, and the effect that the language has on people, whose mandate are regularly sought during politics, and how they verbally respond to political actions.

### **Discourse function of appraisal and the theoretical groundwork**

Politics is a dynamic phenomenon that consistently thrives on (or is subjected to) principles like legitimisation and constant stance, attitude and engagement. What seems more relevant is the fact that political actors always seek legitimisation or approval of their actions, behaviour, policies or ideas; and language serves as the instrument for constructing such approvals or eventual disapproval, and subsequently lead to establishment or puncturing of political relationships as are evident in the Nigerian political terrain. This provides adequate justification for the selection of Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal framework, which originates from systemic functional linguistics (SFL), particularly under the Principles of Stance (Martin, 2003) and the evaluation of epistemological and interpersonal expressions (Thompson and Hunston, 2000: 6). In fact, Martin (2014) further describes it as personal marking of interpersonal meaning in response to the ‘development of a social intersubjective perspective’. An analysis of evaluation is concerned with implicit and explicit opinion, feelings or judgement about someone.

Evaluation has footages in corpus linguistics in the works of Hunston and Thompson (2011), Coffin and O'Halloran (2006), grammar and evaluative lexical semantics in Hunston and Sinclair (2000), Halliday (2009), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). In Martin and White's (2005) perspective, the goal of evaluation is to complement Halliday's (1974) relational-interpersonal metafunctional meaning, taking it beyond mere grammar and its rank variables like mood and modality, which are parts of graduation strategies themselves. Other semantic words used in this regard may include adjectives to vividly depict the concerns of agents.

Appraisal is the organisation of evaluation in three semantic domains, namely, engagement, attitude and graduation, each having its system that function in a multidimensional scale in underscoring the 'semantic resources used to negotiate emotions, judgements and valuation' (Martin, 2000: 145). Bednarek (2009) avers that appraisal is a subset of 'covert affect' and oscillates between opinion, that is appreciation and judgement, and emotion, which is used to condition affect. The boundary between them is conceptualised as overt affect and covert affect, respectively. Bednarek (2009) mentions subcategories of affect as 'emoters', which is used to show emotional responses, indirect denotation of emotional response, which is less personalising and focused on a third person; an example of significance is, 'this must be disappointing for you'. Martin and White (2005) model attitude to be in three subcategories, affect, judgement, and appreciation. While Judgement is centred on attitudinal evaluation either in the negative or positive and is placed against social norms that are used to criticise or praise, condemn or applaud actions 'deeds, sayings, beliefs, motivations', (Martin 1995, Martin 2000), appreciation is the reflection of deeds.

Graduation is realised as force and focus, which are simply manners of realisation. According to Hood (2010), graduation is 'the degree of authenticity (real, truly, pseudo) and specificity (general, particularly) of attitudes and can be either negative or positive, based on affordances in the context or co-text. Graduation is realised with force or focus. Force is practically achieved by intensifying (attributes, processes, proposals) and quantifying (things or processes by extent and frequency). It entails determining the extent of distance and scope in space and time. Focus is a signifier of 'valeur' of authenticity and specificity, and fulfilment, which is further descriptive of completion and actualisation. Engagement is defined on the basis of monogloss (single evaluative stance – resource) and heterogloss (multiple, complex and sometimes divers) representation of different voices, opinions and evaluations in a way that enables coexistence in discourse (Badger and White, 2000). All three (3) broad forms of appraisal are dominant parts of political speeches, especially of presidential candidates that this research is aimed at explicating and investigating, especially analysing Peter Obi's speech at a global event.

Akin to the foregoing theoretical groundwork is a methodological concern, studying language in its naturalistic status and environment – 'language in action'. Consequently, the data for this study was the transcript of Peter Obi's speech at Chatham House, which has become a fascinating place for Nigerian to project their political philosophy and idea. Peter Obi's speech

was purposively chosen because of its appeal to a large number of youth audience who featured or followed it when it was broadcast. The online podcast of the speech was downloaded from YouTube, where researchers and everyone could access. Both the podcast and transcript were compared to resolve areas of discrepancy. Purposive sampling was used to select appropriate statements and lines in the speech, which were subjected to qualitative pragmatic analysis based on global discourse models. The analysis focused solely on evaluating attitude, engagement and graduation in Peter Obi's famous Chatham House speech. Martin and white's (2005) appraisal theory served as the framework.

### **Data presentation analysis and discussion**

The discourse structure of Peter Obi's (PO) Chatham House speech (POCHS) is a sequence of in five (5) parts or descriptions, namely, expressing gratitude, presenting challenges and difficulties, stating achievements/competence, evaluating policy gaps and solutions and concluding. This structure is generic in global political campaign situations, especially by Nigerian presidential candidates addressing audience. These structural contents are topicalised and analysed based on appraisal, attitude, engagement and graduation. Three broad forms of appraisal are evident in Peter Obi's Chatham House speech, which are deployed implicitly or explicitly, as forms of graduation. These are self-evaluation, others-self-evaluation and nation-self-evaluation.

### **POCHS Expressing gratitude**

The introductory part of the speech is used to salute and acknowledge Chatham House, team of organizers and other participants, everyone in the occasion. Salutation – gratitude is realised by evaluative tools ranging from attitude to engagement and graduation. However, it is important to state that the introduction of POCHS expresses the three broad forms of evaluation, self, as evident in the pronouns, 'I', 'me', others, as seen in 'Chatham House', 'Dr Alex Vines' and third person nominal expressions, 'his team', 'their mission and commitment', and nation-self, in 'Nigeria', nominal 'dear country', and the inclusive pronoun, 'us'.

#### **Excerpt 1:**

In agreement to the primacy of gratitude among human virtues, please allow me to begin today with words of gratitude. I am most grateful to Chatham House, Dr Alex Vines and his team for the global impact of their mission and commitment to engagement with Nation building in Nigeria.

#### **Excerpt 2:**

In providing this global platform to interrogate the vision of those seeking to lead Nigeria, at this time when clear existential threats as I will discuss shortly are pervasive across our dear country, this Chatham House event challenges us to new thinking.

On self-evaluation, PO employs attitude, mainly affect, ‘agreement’, to present himself as a polite candidate, who respects not just the decency of the occasion but the protocol, and ‘gratitude’, to imply judgement of his qualities as being humble. He uses these as engagement to align himself with the act of paying obeisance to authorities, which is expected of public speaker as well as political office holders. Other forms of engagement include, the politeness marker, ‘please allow’ marking it within space and time, that is ‘today’. This is used to acknowledge the time and space that the speech is being delivered. His sincere emotions are further poured forth in his usage of appreciation; the adjective ‘grateful’, which is also graduated with an intensifier, that is, ‘most’. This also demonstrates PO’s personal and social etiquette, paying homage or regard to the organisers that are also at the centre of appraisal in the speech. Two agents are reported at the level of other-self-appraisal, the organisers of the event and the political aspirants, which he implicitly belongs to. The latter is presented by using engagement, using the performative, ‘those seeking to lead’. Reveal, inclusively, his intentions or ambition. The former is employed to literarily show his appreciation to ‘the Chatham House and his team,’. Here, Chatham house is personified by the third-person pronoun, ‘his’. For Chatham House, PO employs judgement in evaluating their contributions to democratic institutions. He uses the term ‘impact’, ‘mission’ and ‘commitment’, characteristic nominal words that define the purpose of the organisers. This is contrasted with the implicit questioning of the integrity of the politicians, using the nominal ‘vision’. For the nation-self-evaluation, PO identifies major challenges in the ‘nation’, using ‘existential threats’ and ‘pervasive’ as judgement. The nation is given a negative quality for the purpose of delegitimising the candidacy of other candidates and the administration he is seeking to replace. His intention here is to characteristically evaluate – distinguish between and among political agents on the basis of ‘vision’, using attitude markers, in this case, as a claim (Osisanwo & Ajibade 2022). At various levels of appraisal, in the salutation, PO uses graduation ranging from adjectives, ‘primacy’, ‘most’, ‘clear’, ‘dear’, ‘new’ and the adverb ‘shortly’. These are used as intensifiers and quantifiers or as focus.

### **Evaluating challenges and difficulties**

Politicians, including PO adopt nihilist approach in their campaign speeches, which entails appraising the extent of challenges or problems that are embedded in the polity, to give the notion that they are coming to power with a liberating or reformative agenda. Between the second and fifth paragraph, PO engages in Nation-self-evaluation and other-self-evaluation, presenting different constraints, ranging from economic to political and interpersonal. In most cases, these constraints are represented as setbacks which have derailed the advancement of what he calls ‘a better or new Nigeria’, which he co-opts into his political mantra.

### **Excerpt 3:**

We have alarming insecurity... significant decline in food and economic output, immense trauma... compromised the mental health of communities and in some cases, irredentist pressures and disaffection with the Nigerian project.



**Excerpt 4:**

The economy is in crisis with a troubling debt profile worsened by oil theft of proportion once hard to even imagine, two economic recessions in six years and a lamentable power sector... significantly constrains manufacturing and social life.

**Excerpt 5:**

The Nigerian state is captive to an elite gang-up and a rentier political economy... concentrated political power in the hands of those who came to power and influence mainly through their own contrivances... and not through the affirmation of the people...

On the one hand, PO adopts both implicit and explicit naming of nation-self throughout the speech. For instance, he explicitly addresses the nation as ‘the Nigerian state’, ‘the economy’, while he adopts the inclusive pronoun, ‘we’ to implicitly to underscore evaluation of judgement on his part as a patriot. On the other hand, other-self-evaluation is done explicitly, putting the political class and INEC as the deitic centres. PO begins the section with a combination of affect and graduation, expressing, implicitly, feelings of commiseration with people who have lost ‘many lives and properties’, owing to judgement of insecurity, ‘trauma’, ‘decline in food and economic output’, which are people-oriented mandates for government to ensure. PO uses graduation as force in ‘alarming’ and focus, ‘significant’, ‘immense’ to emphasise the extent of the problem, as it is felt by the Nigerian state. He uses these affect and judgement strategies early in the speech to create a mental image and effect in the minds of the listeners/audience that he (PO) is concerned with the plight of the people in order to get their support and followership. Other significations of judgement include ‘captive’, ‘rentier political economy’ and ‘own contrivances.’ These, significantly, are used to review the state of the nation. This emphasises his vigorous spirit of agitation for better times for the people. Following these, the speaker uses appreciation to review the conditions of the nation-state economy, using negative representations like ‘troubling debt’, ‘crises’, ‘lamentable power sector’ and positive term, ‘incentive’ and ‘interest’, these are qualified using one form of graduation or other like ‘significantly’, the numerical cardinal ‘two’, ‘worsened’ and ‘troubling’.

The use of engagement by PO is both heterogloss, that is, appraising implicitly, in terms of attribute and endorsement, and monogloss, that is, explicitly delegitimising. For instance, he attributes the devastating state of the economy to ‘oil theft’ and lack of commitment of the political class. The intricacies these two conditions culminate in corruption which has eaten deep into the nation. Evaluation is focused on other-self evaluation in the data. It is the political class that facilitates or engage in ‘oil theft’ and is, notionally criticised. His judgement of ‘the Nigerian state as ‘captive’ to an elite gang-up and ‘a rentier political economy’ aligns to the generally criticised idea of Nigeria being ruled by a political cabal.

**Excerpt 6:**

Even after exploiting ethnic and religious cleavages and sentiments to ascend to political power, the very people on whose sentiments they grabbed power often become the primary victims of such political fraud that has rendered Nigeria a failing state with a worsening leadership crisis.

Excerpt 7:

Consequently, Nigeria's Democracy has been on the wane, evident in the Afrobarometer longitudinal tracking which reveals low voter turnout and apathy in the current Republic.

PO, in Excerpts 6 and 7 continues his other-self- evaluation anaphorically, that is repeating the structure of his precedent paragraph, beginning with assessing the Nigerian political class. He uses judgement, 'exploiting ethnic and religious' and affect, 'cleavage and sentiments' on unravel the desperation of the political class and cunning ways by which they attain political positions. In other words, PO claims that the political class exploit attitude (affect), what the electorates are passionate about to get their mandate. But then, he opines that the same political class cannot be trusted, using graduation, which is evident in the repetition of the affect, 'sentiment' and judgement, 'grabbed power', and the sequence of judgement and appreciation, 'the primary victim', political fraud (relating to exploitation of people's vulnerability to attain political mandates), 'a failing state' and 'worsening leadership' respectively. In view of Martin and White's (2005) notion of the amplification of attitude and engagement, it can be said that PO here also uses heterogloss engagement to indict both the electorates of gullibility to the deceit and caprices of the political class. They succumb to ethnic and religious politics and allow the politicians to exploit them with 'cleavages' and 'sentiments.' The judgement, 'political fraud' applies also as engagement – heterogloss for opportunist tendencies practised between politicians and electorates leaning on ethnicity and religion as strategies to get power.

Subsequently, PO returns to the nation-self-evaluation, using judgement to tag the nation as 'a failing state' with a consistent characteristic of 'leadership crises', which is amplified by graduation, in this case, intensifier (force), 'worsening'. This is followed by appreciation, that is a review of the democratisation process (the electoral process overtime). Here, focus is achieved, using metapragmatic joker (Mey, 2001), 'Afrobarometer', particular parameters or scale for measuring the progress of African countries. One of these parameters is the democratic process, which encompasses the electioneering process. PO, using appreciation, in 'wane', 'low voter turnout' and 'apathy', opines that the democratic process in Nigeria is still weak, and this turns out to be the main lacuna exploited by the political class to their advantage. The latter appreciations (low voter turnout and apathy) apply, implicitly, to the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), who has been at the centre of not conducting elections that inspire people to want to participate in elections.

Paragraph (4) of the Chatham House is exclusively devoted to evaluating INEC's attempt to reactivate voter intention and participation, especially among the youths. He (PO) uses affect representations like 'frustrated', 'unhappy' to describe the feeling of people about INEC, and judgement, 'diminished opportunities', to infer that INEC is at the heart of the problems of Nigeria overtime. If they conduct free and fair elections, and bring in candidates that are credible and screen out candidates with questionable characters, the opportunities, which is generalised (heterogloss) for good leadership and progress in the nation would be restored. These opportunities are evaluated, using the nihilist – negative evaluative approach in paragraphs (5) and (6) of the transcript. As characteristic or generic of PO's speeches, he uses graduation, force (quantifier) and focus (specificity and authenticity) to present his arguments broadly with affect, judgement, appreciation and engagements. He uses affect in paragraph (5) and (6) like 'needs', and 'quality of health' for other-self-evaluation, to refer to the condition of the masses, while he uses 'upbringing', 'prudently', and 'stewardship' for self-evaluation, to contrast himself with others, giving the impression or inference that he is not a conventional politician. He uses statistical engagement clauses such as 'poverty rate... is about 16%, that of Nigeria is about 63%'... 133million', in sequence with judgement, 'classified as multidisciplinary poor' to appeal to the emotion of the audience and the electorate, and with reference to his affect, show that he is in a messianic mission. Conscious of the physical context, Chatham House, and his awareness of the presence of intellectuals, PO adopts engagement and valid judgement strategies, inform of graduated statistics and references to economist and Nobel Prize winner, management professor, and global measurement indexes, Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **Evaluation of achievements/competence**

Evaluation of personal competence and achievement in political speeches is mainly centred on self-evaluation and other-self-evaluation, in some cases, in a comparative manner. PO devotes paragraphs (8), (9), and (10) to evaluating himself, his running mate's and his party's competence to occupy the presidential seat. In many instances, evaluation of competence may be based on precedent leadership positions, in PO's case, his achievements as the ex-governor of Anambra State, Nigeria.

#### **Excerpts 8**

... This is at the heart of my remarks today which are deeply rooted in my upbringing, particularly my mother's counsel that I live a life of positive impact and manage both personal and public resources most prudently for sustainable/inclusive growth and development of the society.

#### **Excerpt 9**

It is the principle that guided my stewardship as Governor of Anambra State, Nigeria and led to our much-commended performance with some priced awards to show for it. Some of the awards were for

outstanding accomplishment in key Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) now Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

PO places himself on the purview – at the centre of evaluation in excerpts (8) and (9), which are co-opted from paragraph 6. He uses the affect ‘heart’ to draw attention to the importance of his speech, which is to justify that he is the most competence for the position of president. He also uses affects like ‘upbringing’, ‘prudently’, ‘principle’ and ‘stewardship’ to point out the qualities he is projecting to stand him out, in legitimisation of his acclaimed competence. He uses engagement (heterogloss) to relate some of these affects, meta-discursively. For instance, ‘principle’ and ‘upbringing’ are connected with virtues, which according to him, is in appreciation, that is, attributed to his mother. This is uses judgement, ‘My mother's counsel’ to portray this to the audience, showing that he is from a good and decent home that emphasised on human values and values, rather than vices. The affect relating to prudence and ‘stewardship’ are also related to his appreciation of the test of his qualities with public office. This further sequences to judgement of performance not only in generalised and personal terms, that is ‘life of positive impact’, but also in public office, as seen in ‘public resources most prudently’ and ‘sustainable growth’ public resources’.

PO uses judgement, ‘much-commended performance’, to give concrete or valid account of his public performance as a governor. His intention is to give the impression that he intends to transfer this to the presidency, in the same way that politicians blackmail electorates with their performance in previous positions to vote for them. In the case of PO, He substantiates his performance, using appreciation, ‘priced awards to show’. Graduation is achieved in the speech by reference (reiteration and repetition) to the two agencies used to measure performance in third-world nations. PO switches to collective evaluation, bringing his running mate into the mix, implying, in the process that Nigerian politics is contiguous. This accounts for the choice of running mate from a different region, in some cases, from a different religion from. Nigeria’s electoral process is grossly affected by ethnicity and religion. Hence, there is a need to appeal, mainly, to the two sides of the divide, North and South. He uses the collective pronoun, ‘we’, after introducing his running mate, using appreciation, ‘my running mate’. This also is a monogloss for Vice-Presidential candidate. He resorts to the use of appreciation and engagement (heterogloss), in evaluating their joint ticket, using phrasal verbs that delegitimise the present political structure, on the one hand, and affirms denial of belongingness to present crop of politicians, or their claim of unconventionality. Examples of such phrases are ‘committed to a new politics’, ‘reform our institutions’, ‘to change the leadership class’. The inference is that when given the opportunity, they would act differently. He also employs positive nominal phrases like ‘the ethics of servant-leaders’, ‘fit for purpose’, for appreciation of people’s expectations in good leadership, which he implies they are cable of, and negative nominal appreciation like ‘predators to creators of value’ to criticise the conventional ‘political class’, whose goal and activity in government is to destroy the ‘value’ system of the nation (economy, education, power, among others). PO’s use of the relative clause, ‘who have demonstrated the

competence’ as appreciation, is a monogloss, reiterating or referencing his initial comment about his past performance as governor, and ‘Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed’s’ performance as senator.

Excerpt 10

At the heart of my goal here today is to look at our Labour Party’s key policy planks and how they will drive up the quality of life of the average Nigerian, dramatically reduce poverty and return Nigeria to a place of strategic relevance... a planet imperilled by environmental challenges, terrorism and inequity...

Excerpt 11

... to speak on institutions and how the leadership we offer can facilitate the evolution of stronger institutions... I have no doubt that the policy choices we favour, and the strong institutions Labour Party will facilitate, will move Nigeria from a country of rent seekers sharing Oil receipts and consuming conspicuously, to one that produces...

PO in paragraph 9, where excerpts (10) and (11) are extracted alternates between nation-self and party evaluation, both implicitly and explicitly. All ‘can do’ and ‘will do’ judgements, ‘will drive up’, ‘will facilitate’ and ‘will move’ are used in engagement terms (heterogloss) marking positive evaluation of what is not in the nation and should or would be if the party is elected. Thus, in the same vein, PO is presenting the party as either a reformist or messiah. He employs appreciation to present the party’s ideology and supposed philosophy, with regards to power and leadership. Among these are bidirectional or antithetical terms like ‘quality of life’ and ‘poverty’, and ‘consuming’ and ‘produces’. The latter is used to reiterate the party’s mantra or campaign slogan, ‘from consumption to production’, while the former is an evaluation of the current state of the nation, in reference to world development index, as the poverty capital of the world, as reported by Ubanagu (2023). Affect is used to introduce the party to the audience as a passionate thinker, using ‘heart’ and ‘policy’, which is graduated with focus ‘key’, while judgements, ‘reduce poverty’, ‘return Nigeria’, ‘we offer’ and ‘can facilitate’ are used to reemphasise the political interest or will of the party should people decide to give the party a chance. This is in consonance with generic structure of political campaign speeches, that is placing the party ahead of others and making promises. PO uses appreciation to evaluate Nigeria’s place in the global scene, saying that Nigeria is part of ‘a planet imperilled by environmental challenges, terrorism and inequity’. By engagements, these statements of appreciation are subjectively marked by the inference that while other nations are doing their best to solve these concerns, the Nigerian political class is only concerned with the latter, which is ‘rent seekers sharing oil receipts’. In this case, he is referring to corruption in the system.

### **Evaluating policy gaps and solutions**

It is generic for politicians vying for office to identify two forms of gaps in campaign speeches aimed at intellectual audience, namely policy gaps and problem gaps. While the former is based on the basis evaluation of competence and legitimisation, the latter is aimed at the evaluation of

non-performance and delegitimization of the government they are seeking to dethrone. PO's Chatham House speech is dominated by identification, discursion and evaluation of such gaps. He devotes paragraphs 7, 10 to 20 to evaluate the policy gaps and proffer solutions to them from the purview of his and his political party's manifestoes. Identification of gaps and solutions is achieved through appreciation and judgement, with marked instances of engagement and graduation. Instances of these, among many others discussed under this section, are exemplified in excerpts 12 to 14.

Excerpts 12

Nigeria today is at a critical juncture and the people, led by the youths brutalized by bad leadership, are awake and leading the movement to transformation...

/by the youths brutalized/

Here, a form of 'nouncing' system, that is, nominal word group **NWG** realised by **reduced relative clause** [the youths brutalized] serves as '**completive element**' of a **PWG**. The structural inversion that occurs between the noun, 'youth' and its modifying participial, 'brutalised' is deliberate as strategy not only for 'self-focus', that immersed him in the pool of the psycho-social awakening realised by another **NWG**, the movement to transformation.

Excerpt 13

The growing insecurity in Nigeria is not because the enemy is formidable, it is rather because of lack of focused leadership, ineffective security governance structure and poor coordination from the centre.

The deployment of [**continuous-ing**] and [**past-ed**] forms to find the participials for the modification processes that assist in generating his nominal groups such as [**growing insecurity**] and [**focused leadership**] sets PO on a sustained course of mission of providing that which is lacking, that is, [**ineffective security governance structure and poor coordination from the centre.**]

Excerpt 14

Then, by pursuing a robust reform of the security governance structure with a strong coordinating mechanism that assures that all levels of government – federal, state, and local (with 3-level policing structure) – are aligned with strong collaboration with partners from both the private sector and development groups to provide the required services and deliver results for every Nigerian. Once this is done, it is also important to have a single, clear, coherent, and consistent communication system to keep the government accountable, citizens engaged and involved in the development process.

Beginning from the ones exemplified in excerpts (12) to (14), PO, combining two well-punctuated and well-coordinated **alpha-beta clauses**, identifies problems and policy gaps, ranging from insecurity to the general collapse of the system. This way, excerpt 14 shows that punctuations are not just for decoration; rather, they have certain overt and covert semantic implications that relate the identification process patterns. In excerpt (12) for instance, he uses graduation, ‘critical’, which signifies focus, to lay emphasis on the problem, giving the inference that the entire system is faulty. He also uses negative judgements, ‘youth brutalized’ to appeal to patronize the youth population, showing to them that he understands their plight in reference to police brutality, which triggered to call for change in the system by some factions of the youth population. This also gave birth to the ‘Obidient’ ‘movement’ (appreciation) that became a major mantra for the supporters of PO during the campaign. He uses other negative judgements like ‘bad leadership’, ‘growing insecurity’, ‘ineffective security’, and ‘poor coordination’ to describe the problem in Nigeria, each having one form of graduation or the other. Use uses appreciation, ‘the centre’ to signify his target, which is a heterogloss for the presidency. This also signifies that the head, which is the president, is often held accountable for every problem in the country. PO employs appreciation in excerpts 13, ‘formidable’ and lack of focused leadership, contiguously, that is, in collocative term, to show a sequence in terms of problem. For instance, when the security apparatus is not formidable, there is bound to be insecurity. In the same way, if the government is not ‘focussed’ in terms of initiating the right security measures, insurgents will become formidable.

By the means of strong **alpha-beta** clausal relations provided by the contextually relevant SFG, perhaps, to drive the interests of Chatham house, PO employs positive judgements, ‘transformation’, ‘robust reform’ ‘strong collaboration’, ‘required services’ and ‘deliver results’ in both excerpts (13) and (14) not just to show the will for nation building, but also to underscore the entire responsibility of government. Both force (intensity) and focus (emphasis) are used to drive the argument as seen in the examples. He deploys affects, for example ‘single’, ‘clear’, ‘coherent’, ‘consistent’ and ‘accountable’ to initiate the solutions proposed to governance in Nigeria. Each of these have inherent graduation – focus in terms of the effect generated to the appreciation of ‘communication system’. The use of infinitival phrase or group, [**to keep the government accountable, citizens engaged and involved in the development process**] which Haegemann (1991) refers to as small clause in closing excerpt 14 is instructive in this regard. PO similarly deploys appositive structures, as explicatural engagement in the listing of the tiers of government, ‘all levels of government – federal, state, and local’ to justify his knowledge of the system where he is vying to lead. Knowledge of the system means he is aware of the responsibilities accrued to each. In other paragraphs within the scope of PO’s Chatham House speech, negative judgements are employed to represent the problems in the Nigerian terrain. Among these include ‘inefficient and anti-market distortionary structures’ and ‘impediments to free trade’, which are tied to the register of the commercial economy of the country, and ‘major drain on government revenue’ and ‘institutional corruption’, which are related to the register of

corruption. The engagement of these words is monogloss, relating particularly to the concepts they represent explicitly, while graduation, in terms of emphasis, is seen in ‘inefficient’ and ‘major’, which are replicated in many parts of PO’s Chatham House speech.

Excerpt 15

The second plank of my policy thrust is to “Shift emphasis from consumption to production by running a production-centered economy that is driven by an agrarian revolution and export-oriented industrialization...

Excerpt 16

... we will pursue an agricultural revolution through proper segmentation of Nigeria to activate and harness the factor endowments of different parts of the country for both rapid and mechanized agricultural development and as a pillar for Nigeria’s other sectoral development and industrialization.

Excerpt 17

The third pillar of our governance priorities is to “Restructure the polity through effective legal and institutional reforms to entrench the rule of law, aggressively fight corruption, reduce cost of governance, and establish an honest and efficient civil service”. Reducing the cost of governance in Nigeria is an effective way to fight institutional corruption.

The representations in excerpts (15) to (17) PO focuses on proffering solutions to policy and problems gaps which he has identified also in the course of the speech. The speaker adopts a procedural graduation approach, clearly stratifying or categorising his suggestions using cardinal adjectives, ‘first’, ‘second’, third’ ‘fourth’ and ‘fifth’. In generic sense, these are used for quantifying and transiting between or among ideas. The speaker uses appreciation to evaluate some of his ideological policies. For instance, he uses ‘endowments’ to qualify the potentials for development in the nation, ‘mechanized’ to brand agricultural process in his promissory manifestoes, ‘pillar’ and ‘priorities’ to define the necessity for institutions of government, and ‘honest’ and ‘efficient’ to qualify both the people and the kind of policy expected of them. PO employs judgement also to weigh proffered solutions on the basis of their needs or relevance to either the nation or the people. The use of judgement beginning from the ones in excerpts (15) to (17), there are judgements like ‘reduce cost of governance’, which is an evaluation of the need for prudence in politics, ‘fight corruption’, which evaluates the endemic corrupt practices in the Nigerian polity, ‘pursue an agricultural revolution’, and ‘proper segmentation’, which evaluate actions plans for agriculture. There is graduation for some of these evaluations using force, ‘aggressively’ and ‘rapid’, and focus, repetition, and words like ‘effective’ to describe the process and result of policies.

In other paragraphs of the speech, PO consistently deploys appreciation and judgement in the manner identified above. Some of the appreciation include ‘budgeting system’, qualifying it with graduation, ‘new’. This lays emphasis on the need for reform, as he emphasizes in the speech, and delegitimizes the extant system which he is seeking to change. Statistical judgement are also



common features of PO's speeches, as evident in the Chatham House speech. Some of these statistical evidence in the speech, are 'the \$2.3b Nigeria-Siemens network improvement deal', 'achieve 7,000 MW... 11,000 megawatts by 2024' and 'ranks Nigeria 168 out of 173 countries.' Statistical judgements are used to excite the audience, and proof to them that he (PO) is not only intelligent but also competent to occupy the position. Appreciation terms like 'enhance human capital', 'global competitiveness', 'quality healthcare' and 'entrepreneurship education'; these factors are the pivots of democracies, hence the need to pay attention. Lastly, the appreciation, 'human capital', and 'global competitiveness' 'quality healthcare' and entrepreneurship are used by PO to justify and legitimize his competence for the position.

### Summative evaluation/findings

The work reveals that PO's Chatham House speech projects three (3) major stances:

Referential submission, self and corporate-self submission and advisory submission as presented below in table:

Referential submission	Self & corporate-self submission	Advisory submission
References to the words of great men such as Chinua Achebe underscored PO's intention of pinning his ideas and concerns on the pedestal of existing knowledge, history and experience. "As our erudite Professor Chinua Achebe stated, "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership".	PO was polite, modest and diplomatic in his presentation. Examples of expressions that further reveal this include: "...please allow me to begin today with words of gratitude...", "The Nigerian state is captive to an elite gang-up and a rentier political economy..." etc	The advisory technique employed by PO highlights very clinical points of view (such as the rights of citizens and economic development) which aims at proffering solutions to Nigeria's current unpalatable situation. In stating these points, the audience (masses) are indirectly motivated (advised) in voting the right candidate. "Our 7th priority is to conduct an afro-centric diplomacy that protects the rights of Nigerian citizens abroad and advances the economic interests of Nigerians and Nigerian businesses in a changing world".

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<p>PO’s references to other academic sources establish concreteness and substance in his speech. “What Nigeria needs is a Great Escape as the 2015 Noble prize winner in Economics Angus Deaton of Princeton University elucidated, that what separates poor &amp; rich is attributable to Health &amp; Education.”</p>	<p>PO was concise and frank in his submissions. He deployed such expressions as “The growing insecurity in Nigeria is not because the enemy is formidable, it is rather because of lack of focused leadership, ineffective security governance structure and poor coordination from the centre.”</p>	<p>PO was assertive in passing his judgment. This was betoned in his expression to fulfil all his promises if elected as the Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces (the President). “In line with my upbringing, especially my Mother’s counsel, my promise is that Nigeria’s resources will be most prudently used and as the Commander in Chief, I Peter Obi sincerely pledge that Our Pact with Nigeria will be diligently pursued to create a new Nigeria characterised by sustainable/inclusive growth and development.”</p>
<p>Reference to specific figures and numbers also accentuate PO’s analytical strength. “However, we will immediately complete the \$2.3b Nigeria-Siemens network improvement deal to achieve 7,000 MW stable capacity by the end of this year (2023), 11,000 megawatts by 2024, and 25,000 megawatts by 2025.” “The World Bank’s Human Capital Development Index ranks Nigeria 168 out of 173 countries.”</p>	<p>PO’s self submission expands to his dedication and inclusion of his future plans in his speech. “...we will pursue an agricultural revolution...” “The second plank of my policy thrust is to “Shift emphasis from consumption to production by running a production-centered economy that is driven by an agrarian revolution and export-oriented industrialization...” etc</p>	<p>PO was persuasive in his submission. He tried to make the audience see why it was right for them to vote him into power. “...let me say that the problem with Nigeria is at once complex and simple. It rests on leadership.” “When people of competence, character, commitment, and compassion take over leadership and pursue their mission and task with the seriousness required, a New Nigeria characterised by peace, unity, prosperity, inclusiveness will be achieved and sustained.</p>

Three (3) groups of summative evaluation were deployed, namely, referential submission, self and corporate-self submission and advisory submission. He uses referential submission to underscore his knowledge of literature, alluding to Chinua Achebe’s appreciation of Nigeria’s challenge as ‘leadership problem’. This is also used to buttress his conclusion that the present political class need total overhauling. Self and corporate-self submission is centred on his and his running mate’s candidacy, which he achieves by explicit naming and qualifying, using affects such as ‘desire’ to work and ‘Mother’s counsel’ as evaluative conditions to get the electorates to

repose their trust in them. Lastly, the advisory submission is achieved by the attempt to get the electorate to transfer their votes or mandates, using both appreciation and judgements. The appreciation features and their effect include ‘the problem with Nigeria is... complex and simple’, showing that voters should vote for him because he understands the nation’s problem; ‘the challenge of leading’, ‘the hallmarks of true leadership’, indicating that he knows how to deploy leadership to solve the problems; and ‘New Nigeria’ and ‘Nigeria that works’, reiterating his political ideology/philosophy and mantra.

## CONCLUSION

The import of the foregoing analyses is that the Nigerian politics has come of age as a global phenomenon due, perhaps to the centrality of this Africa’s largest economy. The impact of Chatham House within the purview of political campaign, political engagement and evaluation has been evinced in the analysis of Peter’s Obi’s speech in that context. In other words, globalised political context overriding influenced PO’s exploitation of the rarely available global platforms (Chatham House) to articulate his political ambition and manifesto. It is, therefore, important to note that, while context played a vital role in the quality of the speech, and the choice of evaluation, that is, appraisal strategies deployed by the speaker, what seems consistent is the aim of the speech, which is, on the one hand, valued at impressing the global audience, especially with statistical, empirical and referential evaluation, and, on the other hand seeking to win more of the local youth population, who were the focus of the speech. His evaluative style, his consistent use of affects, such as ‘mother’s advice’, ‘upbringing’ and ‘honesty’ appeals to the youth, with the aim of inspiring a new form of politics and national orientation. His consistent use of gradation to qualify, quantify and emphasize affects and appreciation were targeted towards justifying his competence, while when used with judgement, they were used to intensify problems and suggested policy concerns or solutions.

Appraisal in POCHS was performed on self, corporate-self, others-self and nation-self, each of these with implicit and explicit evaluative principles (affect, appreciation and judgement). Self-evaluation was based on the speaker, corporate-self was based on the speaker and his running mate or the speaker and his party, that is, Labour Party, while others-self was used to critique existing political class and their policies. Nation-self evaluation was performed on the policies, problems and conditions of the country. Deploying the English language as dynamic force for presentation and evaluation of persons, problems, policies and panaceas that are capable of endearing him to the expectation of his cherished audience, PO’s Chatham House speech, which occasions features of political speeches in conventional or generic sense, concluded by making significant submissions around the levels of appraisal, self, corporate-self and nation-self, in this case, drawing attention only to his competence, candidacy and policy for the nation to indicate that he is a serious candidate whose focus is entirely on nation building. What is particularly instructive in the entire speech is the fact that PO, recognising the sanctity of the context, and respecting same, focused his appraisal on campaign issues and not personal deficiency issues,

even though the emphasis on ‘affect’ seemed to implicitly suggest or attack politicians with deficient characters. In effect, Peter Obi, exemplifying political candidates who speak, using language with all its discursive elements on the floor of Chatham House, tend to generically speak more to economic issues, policies and whole of the Nigerian presidency which are more of appealing interest to 21<sup>st</sup> century’s global audience. This discursive study of ‘Chatham house of interest’ thus seems an attestation to the revolutionary effect of McLuhan concepts of the world as global village, the idea of an integrated planetary nervous system as part of our popular culture. This exemplified globalisation programme, therefore, becomes contextually relevant for further studies in the twenty-first century Applied English Linguistics.

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