

Intertextuality and The Submerged Portrayal of Goodwill in Nigerian Political Discourse

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ABSTRACT: *Political discourse can be understood as the language and communication strategies used by politicians, political parties, government, and media to articulate their perspectives, promote their interests and shape public opinion. In achieving these, political actors leverage the foregrounded knowledge of their audience by alluding to various existing texts and themes that frame their speeches in a way that presents them in a good light to their audience. This concept, known as intertextuality, arms the textual and thematic repertoire of various political actors and provides the basis for an ideological connection between politicians and the masses. This study employs Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics to scrutinize the intertextual dimensions in Peter Obi's political discourse, focusing on linguistic choices at the levels of metafunction (ideational, interpersonal and textual), lexicogrammar, register genre, and context of the situation. Gathering data from online newspaper publications, Facebook and Twitter posts, as well as campaign and conference speeches, the research reveals how Obi strategically deploys intertextual references to convey goodwill and position himself as a transformative figure—a "Messiah" addressing Nigeria's multifaceted challenges. The analysis underscores Obi's adeptness in tailoring linguistic choices to specific contexts and audiences, portraying him as intimately connected to the concerns of the masses. Significantly contributing to a sparse literature on the intertextual analysis of Obi's speeches, this research sheds light on the intricate dynamics of Nigerian political discourse, offering valuable insights into the strategic use of language in shaping political identity and fostering connections with the public.*

KEYWORDS: intertextuality, submerged, goodwill, political, discourse

INTRODUCTION

The realm of Nigerian political discourse is a dynamic and captivating arena, where politicians craft their narratives with rhetorical finesse to gain public favour and secure power. Within this complex landscape lies a subtle, yet influential aspect of linguistics known as intertextuality, a concept that refers to the interconnectedness of texts and how they draw upon each other to convey meaning. In the context of Nigerian political discourse, intertextuality becomes a potent tool for weaving intricate webs of goodwill, whereby politicians subtly reference existing texts, historical events, and cultural symbols to evoke emotions, garner trust, and shape public perception.

History and consistency of occurrences support the argument that at the heart of Nigerian political discourse is the intrinsic depiction of goodwill, an often unspoken, latent, and veiled expression of benevolence and altruism. Beneath the surface of overt promises and grand declarations, politicians employ intertextual cues to establish a sense of camaraderie with their audience, align themselves with revered figures from Nigeria's past, and invoke shared values, interests, and experiences. By skilfully intertwining their messages with familiar narratives, they seek to tap into the collective consciousness and create a favourable image of themselves as stewards of prosperity and progress.

In this study, we will explore the relationship between intertextuality and goodwill in political discourse within the Nigerian political terrain. Using Peter Obi as the only focus, we will examine a variety of examples, including his speeches and selected social media posts to identify and analyze how he deploys intertextuality to propose goodwill. Furthermore, the study will examine how different contexts and audiences may colour how goodwill is portrayed in Obi's political discourse.

Previous studies conducted on Nigerian political discourse have not dealt rigorously with intertextuality, which we must have understood by now to be a potent tool that many Nigerian political players deploy to navigate through their narratives to ultimately index themselves as the solution to Nigeria's problems. Furthermore, the speeches of Mr Peter Obi have not been subjected to systematic intertextual analysis - thus, this work capitalizes on the paucity of academic research conducted in these areas to offer insights into how Peter Obi deploys intertextuality in his speeches, and how these intertextual references signal his goodwill.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The theoretical framework for this study would be Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL Henceforth). SFL is a functional approach to language analysis that examines how language is used to create meaning in different social contexts. It views language as a social semiotic system, where linguistic choices made by speakers/writers are geared towards achieving specific communicative goals. Thus, SFL is an approach to linguistics that looks at language as a meaning-making activity, and it suggests that language is a social phenomenon that is shaped by the context

in which it is used. In SFL, language is analyzed in terms of its system of meanings, which is called a “semiotic system”. This review aims to provide an overview of SFL, discuss its basic assumptions, and explore how SFL has been applied in various fields of study.

SFL has its roots in the work of Saussure (1966), who argued that language is a system of signs that are linked to concepts. However, SFL goes beyond this by arguing that language is a system of meanings that can be analyzed in terms of three metafunctions, namely: the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual metafunctions (Halliday, 1978). These metafunctions are not separate components of language, but they are interrelated and also interact with each other.

The ideational metafunction refers to the representation of experience in language. This metafunction is concerned with the way language represents the world around us, including people, objects, and events. It includes the use of transitivity which is how participants in a discourse are represented in clauses. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: p.115), “Transitivity is a major resource for making meanings about events and actions in the experiential world”. In other words, transitivity is a tool used in language to represent actions and events.

The interpersonal metafunction focuses on the relationship between speakers and their audiences (Halliday, 1978). This metafunction is concerned with how speakers use language to interact with others and express their attitudes, values, and beliefs. The interpersonal metafunction includes the mood system, which is how speakers express their attitude towards what they are saying. According to Martin and Rose (2003: p.41), “the mood system allows speakers to express their attitude toward their message, and thus, their attitude towards their audience”. In this way, the mood system is an important tool used in language to express interpersonal relations.

The textual metafunction refers to the way language is organized in discourse. This metafunction is concerned with how speakers use language to create texts, and how these texts are structured to convey meaning. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: p.6), “the textual metafunction is concerned with the ordering and arrangement of words and structures”. This explains that textual metafunction is a tool used in language to create texts that are coherent and meaningful. Correspondingly, Matthiessen (1995) posits that SFL “is a theory of language that conceives of language as a resource for making meaning in social contexts” (p.1). He further maintains that SFL explores the structure and function of language systems, to develop a comprehensive account of how language works.” (p.1). This definition combines several elements of the previous definitions, describing SFL as a theory that explores the structure and function of language systems to develop a comprehensive account of how language works. Matthiessen (1995) in his survey on SFL, upholds that the SFL theory is not just concerned with describing language, but with understanding how it functions as a tool for social communication and meaning-making.

SFL is useful for analyzing language in a variety of contexts, including literature, media, and education. In literary studies, SFL has been used to analyze the language of literary texts and

identify patterns in the way language is used to create meaning. According to Short (2018: p. 6), “SFL can be used to examine everything from the grammar of a sentence to the structures of entire novels, helping identify patterns and themes in literary works”. By analyzing the language of literary texts, SFL can provide insights into the ways meaning is created in literature.

In media studies, SFL has been used to analyze the language of media texts, such as news articles and advertisements. According to Stenglin (2013: p. 45), “SFL provides a framework for analyzing the way media texts are constructed and how meaning is created through the language and image”. By analyzing the language of the media, SFL can provide insights into the way media construct social reality.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) assert that “SFL sees language as a resource for creating meaning and meaning as a social process that is situated in specific contexts” (p.6). Halliday and Matthiessen describe SFL as a theory that emphasizes the social context in which language is used, viewing language as a system of meaning that is part of this context. This explains that language is not just a set of arbitrary symbols, but is deeply connected to the social and cultural practices which bring the text to life. This view is succinctly supported by Eggins and Martin (2017) who see SFL as “a functional theory of language that views language as a system of meaning, with the meaning of a linguistic expression deriving from its place within larger systems of social and cultural practice”. (p7). Eggins (2004: 9-11, 54-112), expands the earlier position of Halliday (1999) and emphasizes how meaning in language is not only determined by its elements (words and phrases) but also, by their place within the larger social and cultural systems. This implies that meaning in language is always situated within a specific context and that understanding this context is crucial for understanding the meaning of language.

Thompson (2014) describes SFL as “a model of language that sets out to describe the relationship between the structures of language and the functions that language performs in social contexts” (p.1). Thompson (2014) further elaborates on the idea of language as a tool for social communication, emphasizing that language is not only a means of communication but also a resource for accomplishing social goals. In this regard, language can be seen as a tool for achieving various functions or purposes in social interactions.

Meaning in language is not simply determined by individual words or phrases but by the complex interactions between different levels of linguistic structure. Butt et.al. (2000) maintain that SFL is a theory of language that sees language as a resource for making meaning, with meaning realized through the interaction of three strata of organization – semantics, lexicogrammar, and phonology. This definition emphasizes the relationship between the various levels of language organization in the negotiation of meaning.

SFL provides a powerful tool for analyzing the complex and multifaceted nature of language use in political discourse. By examining how language is structured, and the functions that it performs

in social contexts, SFL can reveal the subtle ways in which political actors use language to share public opinion and advance their interests. One key aspect of political discourse that SFL can illuminate is intertextuality, which is our focus in this study. Intertextuality simply explains how texts are connected to other texts and draws on shared cultural knowledge and assumptions. By analyzing intertextual connections between different political texts, SFL can reveal how political actors use language to create a sense of shared values and cultural identity and to link their messages to those of other influential actors. SFL can reveal how political actors use language to construct a sense of connection and cooperation, even as they pursue their interests and agenda. Understanding these implicit portrayals of goodwill is crucial for developing a more nuanced understanding of political discourse and how language is used to frame public opinion and project political agendas. Thus, SFL offers a unique perspective and analytical framework for the analysis of intertextuality in political discourse, hence, the analysis of data in this study will focus on the following aspects:

- **Metafunctions:** SFL emphasizes the three metafunctions of language, as stated earlier, which are ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction focuses on how language represents and construes meaning. The interpersonal metafunction examines how language is used to establish relationships, express attitudes, and negotiate power. The textual metafunction deals with the organization and coherence of texts.
- **Lexicogrammar:** SFL pays attention to the relationship between lexis (vocabulary) and grammar. Analyzing the choices of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and discourse patterns can reveal how politicians employ language to construct meaning, establish rapport with the audience, and convey submerged portrayals of goodwill.
- **Register and Genre:** SFL emphasizes the role of register and genre in language use. Register refers to the variety of language used in different social contexts, while genre refers to specific types of texts or discourses. By examining the register and genre of political discourse, we can uncover how intertextuality is employed to convey goodwill within specific communicative contexts.
- **Contexts of Situation:** SFL emphasizes the importance of situational context in understanding language use. Analyzing the social, cultural, and political contexts in which political discourse occurs can help illuminate the motives, ideologies, and power dynamics underlying the submerged portrayals of goodwill.

Applying SFL as the theoretical foundation for the analysis of data will further help us gain insights into the functional aspects of language, and how they contribute to the portrayal of goodwill within political discourse. It will provide the leverage to explore the intricate relationship between language choices, social contexts, and ideological representations systemically.

Political discourse is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of communicative practices, ranging from formal speeches and debates to informal conversations and social media posts. One major aspect of political discourse is how it draws on references and builds

upon other texts and contexts. This phenomenon, known as intertextuality, plays a significant role in shaping and framing how political actors and audiences understand and interpret political issues and events. Intertextuality simply refers to the interrelationships or connectedness among texts that shape a text's meaning. Bloor and Bloor (2007:54) (qt. In Kamalu 2012: 122) perceive intertextuality as "a discourse process that is associated with the notion of textual re-creation, reiteration, and interpretation". They argue that intertextuality has two main functions within CDA: (1) "it plays an important role in revealing speakers' and writers' strategies in reinforcing or reformulating ideas and beliefs, and (2) it can reveal traces of the dominant ideology or evidence of ideological struggle and cultural change". The identifiable echoes of other texts in a present text intensify the experience of the text by adding layers of meaning to enrich the reading/listening experience. Intertextuality manifests in various spectrums, depending on the style of the writer/speaker, the context, and the medium of the delivery. The various dimensions of intertextuality include:

- **Direct Intertextuality:** Here, intertextuality occurs when a text explicitly references or quotes another text. It can involve direct quotations, allusions, or parodies, such as referencing a famous line from Achebe's fiction or quoting a passage from the Bible or Quran.
- **Indirect Intertextuality:** This refers to more subtle references to other texts. It may involve thematic similarities, motifs, or narrative structures that evoke other works. This type of intertextuality requires readers to make connections and recognize patterns. For example, a novel featuring the transition of a young struggling protagonist on his journey to affluence may evoke similarities with the protagonist's archetype found in many other literary works.
- **Parodic Intertextuality:** This involves intentionally imitating or mocking another text, often for humorous effect. It involves mimicking the style, characters, or themes of a well-known work or text while adding a satirical or comedic twist. Parody can be in literature, film, and other forms of media.
- **Structural Intertextuality:** This refers to the borrowing or adaptation of narrative structures, plot devices, or storytelling techniques from other texts. It involves using established narrative frameworks or conventions to shape the form and content of new work. An example of structural intertextuality is seen in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus*. While the two novels have different settings and storylines, they share common themes and narrative elements. Both novels explore Nigerian history, politics, and the impact of societal changes on individuals and families. The structural intertextuality between these novels allows readers to recognize Adichie's distinctive storytelling style, thematic preoccupation, and the exploration of power dynamics within Nigerian society.
- **Cultural Intertextuality:** This involves references or allusions to cultural, historical, or social elements in a text. It can involve referencing specific events, ideologies, or cultural artefacts that are familiar to the intended audience. Cultural intertextuality helps to situate work within a specific cultural context and can enhance the readers' understanding and

engagement. An example of this is seen in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*. In this novel, Okri prominently features cultural intertextuality as it shows an intertwining of elements of Nigerian folklore, spirituality, and cultural traditions to explore the protagonist's journey and the social landscape of Nigeria.

- ***Intertextuality in Adaptations:*** Intertextuality is often present in adaptations of literary works from one medium to another. For example, a film adaptation of a novel may include visual or narrative references to the original text, or incorporate elements from other related works.

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Intertextuality is a complex and multifaceted concept, and different texts may exhibit multiple types simultaneously. Its presence adds depth and richness to the interpretation and analysis of literature and other forms of media. In particular, the concept of intertextuality can help to shed light on the ways political discourse represents and portrays goodwill. Goodwill, defined as the desire to cooperate and work together for mutual benefit, is a fundamental aspect of successful political relationships and interactions. However, the concept of goodwill is often submerged or made implicit in political discourse, rather than being explicitly stated or conveyed. By analyzing the intertextual connections and references within political discourse, one can begin to unpack and understand the ways goodwill is framed and re-presented for public acceptance.

The study of intertextuality and goodwill in political discourse has important implications for understanding the dynamics of political communications and relationships. Intertextuality can reveal the underlying assumptions and expectations that shape political discourse, as well as how different actors and audiences interpret and respond to political messages. By considering how goodwill is portrayed in political discourse, one can also gain insight into the factors that influence the successes or failures of political interactions.

Intertextuality is a widely studied concept in the field of linguistics and discourse analysis, and its application in the study of political discourse has generated a significant amount of studies in the literature, some of which are succinctly captured in the present study. Empirical studies have shown that SFL is a useful framework for analyzing intertextuality in political discourse. Intertextuality refers to the relationship texts share, and it is an important tool used in political discourse to draw on the opinions of others and support one's arguments and typically, sentiments. In this review, we will explore how SFL has been used to analyze intertextuality in political discourse and what insights can be gained from this type of analysis.

Kamalu (2012) in his work, *Intertextuality as a Discourse Strategy in Ben Okri's Fiction*, stratified the analysis of intertextuality into four parts that looked at the intertextual dialogue with African folk tradition; incorporations from the Patriarchs of African Literature; intertextual relations with western literary conventions; and textual and ideological incorporations from Okri's works. The study revealed that Okri's deployment of intertextuality as a discourse strategy enables the reader/analyst to link connected texts or styles as their deployment in one situation relates them to

other texts outside the immediate context. Kamalu's analysis of certain phrases like *spirit token*, *abiku*, *famished road*, and *dead tapster*: and the deployment of narrative strategies like the resource of the folk tradition to connect the novels with an array of related texts, styles, and experiences outside the bandwidth of the immediate texts help us understand certain aspects of the narrative, based on how a particular text has been used in previous situations.

Another study by Schulze and Ramirez (2007) investigated how elementary learners of the English language (ELLs) used intertextuality as a resource for generating informational texts. Using the tools of CDA and SFL, the study identifies instances of manifest intertextuality to evaluate the extent of reliance on intertextual resources. Findings reveal that the study has great implications for both the teacher and researcher of ELL writing as students' deployment of intertextuality supported their construction of the practices associated with the informational text genre. They opine that "students use the resources (of intertextuality) available to them to appropriate chunks of language which support their development of the target genre". (87).

A study by Kitaeva and Oerova (2019), titled *Intertextuality in political discourse*, presented a discussion on intertextuality in European and American political discourse. The study investigated and highlighted the uncontested dialogicity of political discourse. The study thus reveals that political leaders use intertextuality to establish links with their audience, outlining common values with the support of history, cultural traditions, and religion.

Another study by Ellah (2022), examined the intertextual reference in the inaugural speech of President Buhari. Findings revealed that; President Buhari's inaugural speech shows certain salient characteristics of both direct and indirect genre-mixing based on Nigeria's socio-political and socio-cultural milieu; it also revealed that the speech was fraught with skilful exploitation of religious discourse, as portrayed in his reverence to God at various times in the speech; again it revealed that the discourse of history had been harnessed optimally to enable Buhari and the audience relate to the past, to make the right decisions for the future; ultimately, the study has shown how intertextuality is an indispensable tool politicians use in navigating through their discourses.

These studies demonstrate that SFL is a useful framework for analyzing intertextuality in political discourse. By using SFL to analyze political discourse researchers can identify how politicians draw on the opinions of others and use these opinions to support and shape their arguments. This type of analysis can provide insight into how political discourse functions and how persuasive strategies are employed to sway public opinion, and also help to uncover the ideological and cultural assumptions that underlie political speeches.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative approach, employing the purposive sampling method to meticulously select data sources germane to the research objective. From an initial pool of 23 data obtained from various online platforms, encompassing newspaper publications, Twitter, and Facebook posts, the study meticulously curates a subset of 7 data points for in-depth analysis. This refined selection comprises three distinct online newspaper publications, two Facebook posts, and two Twitter posts originating from Mr. Peter Obi, the presidential candidate of the Labour Party. Augmenting the primary dataset are four ancillary texts—specifically, the Holy Bible, the Quran, Achebe’s seminal works "The Trouble with Nigeria" and "Morning Yet on Creation Day"—which serve as secondary sources. The selection of primary data is predicated upon their ideological commonalities, delineating a thematic interconnectedness that encapsulates the recurrent concept of goodwill. This methodological framework ensures a judicious curation of data, substantiating the scholarly rigour and methodical precision inherent in this qualitative inquiry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Here, we will conduct an intertextual analysis of the speeches of the presidential candidate of the Labour Party in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, Mr Peter Obi. Our focus is to draw on the intertextual references and see how these references help them align and actualize affinity with the masses. Data will be analyzed under the four intertextual dimensions, direct intertextuality, cultural intertextuality, indirect intertextuality, and historical intertextuality.

Direct Intertextuality (Explicit Intertextuality)

Example 1

“In conclusion, let me say that the problem with Nigeria is at once complex and simple. It rests on leadership. As our erudite professor, Chinua Achebe stated ‘*The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership*’”.

See <https://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2023/01/17/well-lead-an-inclusive-sustainable-nigeria-that-works-for-all-obi/amp/>

This expression is credited to Obi, where he spoke about his desire to lead an inclusive, sustainable Nigeria that works for all.

Metafunctions

The **ideational metafunction** is evident in the articulation of the problem, attributing it to a dual nature—both complex and simple. The focus on leadership as the root cause aligns with the ideational function's emphasis on how language represents and construes meaning. The strategic incorporation of Chinua Achebe's quote bolsters the argument, introducing an authoritative perspective.

The **interpersonal metafunction** is manifested through the speaker's direct engagement with the audience. The use of the phrase "let me say" establishes a personal connection, enhancing the

persuasive impact. Additionally, the reference to Chinua Achebe contributes to interpersonal dynamics by aligning the speaker with an esteemed figure, appealing to shared understanding. Within the **textual metafunction**, the structure of "In conclusion" serves to signal the end of the discourse, providing closure to the argument. The employment of intertextuality through the quotation from Chinua Achebe enhances coherence and underscores the significance of the stated conclusion. Through the interplay of intertextuality, Obi attempts to establish an emotional connection with the masses. By referencing Achebe, he not only borrows the author's credibility but also signals his awareness of the longstanding concerns about leadership in Nigeria. This strategy enables Obi to position himself as a candidate who not only understands the troubles but also possesses the necessary qualities and commitment to address them effectively.

Lexicogrammar

The **lexicogrammatical choices** in the quote, such as the descriptors "complex and simple" and the attribution of the problem to a "failure of leadership," demonstrate a deliberate use of vocabulary to convey a sophisticated understanding of the issue. The use of reported speech and an attributive clause further contributes to the grammatical precision employed for persuasive effect.

Register and Genre

Regarding **register and genre**, the formality of the language and the structured conclusion align with a persuasive genre, indicative of an argumentative discourse. The careful selection of words and the deliberate organization of ideas contribute to the overall persuasive register.

Context

Finally, considering the **context of situation**, the quote is situated within a discussion about Nigeria's challenges, specifically emphasizing leadership. The reference to Chinua Achebe introduces a cultural and intellectual context, situating the discourse within broader discussions on Nigeria's socio-political landscape.

Peter Obi's utilization of the direct quotation stated above demonstrates his strategic use of intertextuality to resonate with the masses and establish his credibility as a political figure. Intertextuality plays a significant role in Obi's speech, as he draws upon the words of a renowned Nigerian author to strengthen his argument. By referencing Achebe, a literary icon of astounding repute, revered for his critical analysis of Nigeria's societal issues, Obi aligns himself with Achebe's reputation and taps into the authority associated with his words. This intertextual reference allows Obi to leverage the trust and respect that the audience may have for Achebe and extend it to himself, portraying himself as a leader who shares the same concerns and perspectives as the revered author.

The concept of goodwill is also evident in Obi's use of the above quotation. The phrase "failure of leadership" suggests that the problems faced by Nigeria are primarily a result of ineffective or

inadequate leaders. By deploying this quote in his speech, Obi implies that if he were to assume the position of leadership, he would bring about positive change and address the underlying issues plaguing the nation. This appeals to the audience's desire for capable leadership, positioning Obi as a "messiah" to bring about an end to Nigeria's leadership problems.

In conclusion, this SFL analysis elucidates how the linguistic features and rhetorical strategies employed in the provided quote contribute to a persuasive discourse on the complexities of Nigeria's challenges, particularly attributing them to leadership issues. The nuanced interplay of metafunctions, lexicogrammar, register, and context underscores the effectiveness of communication in addressing a multifaceted problem.

Example 2

"...the markets are a leveller – *'the rich and poor buy from the same market'*"



Picture Source: Official Twitter Page

The **ideational metafunction** manifests in Obi's assertion that markets function as a social equalizer. The metaphorical use of "leveller" conveys the idea that, within the marketplace, social distinctions between the rich and poor are diminished. The embedded quotation, "' the rich and poor buy from the same market,'" further reinforces this ideological stance, emphasizing the shared economic participation within the marketplace.

The **interpersonal metafunction** is subtly at play through the use of the quote. The employment of reported speech and the inclusive pronoun "we" establishes a sense of shared experience, creating a connection between the speaker and the audience. This strategy fosters a communal perspective on the market's role as a leveller in society.

Within the **textual metafunction**, the structure of the quote is straightforward, with the hyphen indicating a continuation of thought. The quotation is seamlessly integrated into the discourse, contributing to the overall coherence and reinforcing the main argument about the levelling function of markets.

Turning to **lexicogrammar**, the choice of the term "leveller" and the juxtaposition of "the rich and poor" highlight the dichotomy in social class, enhancing the persuasive impact. The use of reported speech adds a layer of directness and authenticity to the statement, reinforcing the credibility of his message.

Regarding **register and genre**, the formality of the language aligns with a reflective and explanatory register. The use of metaphorical language contributes to a persuasive and rhetorical style, indicative of a discourse aiming to influence perceptions about the societal role of markets. Lastly, within the **context of situation**, the quote is situated within a discourse on social dynamics and economic participation. It taps into broader discussions on inequality and commonality within society, framing the marketplace as a symbolic space where social distinctions are transcended. The marketplace setting during a political campaign visit adds symbolic value to the quote. The market represents a space where people from diverse backgrounds interact, exchange goods, and engage in economic activities. By choosing to deliver the quote in this specific setting, the speaker utilizes the symbolism of the market to underscore the idea of inclusivity and commonality among individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Thus, the quote made in a marketplace during a political campaign visit suggests an intentional effort by the speaker to connect with the common man and appeal to the masses. By delivering this message in a place that is associated with everyday life and the economic concerns of ordinary people, the speaker aims to resonate with their experiences, aspirations, and challenges. This can be perceived as an attempt to establish a sense of relatability and empathy positioning Obi as a representative of the people's interest.

This quote is consistent with the ideologies of the Bible and the Quran based on equality. The two holy books mentioned are the 'manuals' of the two dominant religions in Nigeria. – Christianity and Islam. The marketplace, being a microcosm of the larger Nigerian society presents a perfect ground for Obi to harness the religious stoicism of Nigerians to present himself as a darling of the masses. In the Bible book of Proverbs 22:2, the writer says "The rich and the poor have this in common, the LORD is the maker of them all". Comparatively, we can argue that this bible portion supports the stated quote by Obi as they both establish a connection with the common man, particularly the poor. The Bible portion emphasizes the shared humanity and equality of all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status. It suggests that both the rich and the poor are equal in the eyes of God, the maker of all.

Similarly, in Quran 9 vs 71, it is recorded that:

And believers, men, and women, are allies of one another.
They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and
establish prayer
And give *zakah* and obey Allah and his messenger. Those –
Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is exalted
in might and wisdom.

The above portion of the Quran shows equality in the sight of Allah. The Quran has charged all believers (Muslims) to treat each other as allies, thus, expunging any dichotomy, class structure, or asymmetrical power relations that may arise as a result of differences in the social standing of individuals. This is consistent with Obi's message in the marketplace where he asserted the market to be a leveller of men.

Through intertextuality, Obi utilizes this quote to establish a sense of goodwill associated with equality. By associating himself with the quote, Obi implies that he recognizes and acknowledges the struggles and aspirations of the common man. This aligns with his political agenda of advocating for the interests and well-being of the less privileged.

Analyses have unveiled how the linguistic features and rhetorical strategies embedded in the quote contribute to a compelling discourse on the role of markets as societal equalizers. The nuanced interplay of metafunctions, lexicogrammar, register, and context underscores the effectiveness of the communication in conveying a perspective on the shared economic participation of individuals across different social strata within the marketplace.

Cultural Intertextuality

Example 3



Picture Source: Official Twitter Page

Peter Obi's quote demonstrates a deliberate incorporation of cultural intertextuality, specifically drawing upon phrases from the national anthem of Nigeria, akin to his prior speech. The mention of "one nation bound in freedom, peace and unity" and "peace and justice shall reign" establishes

a direct connection with the cultural intertextuality of the national anthem. This intertextual reference serves as a powerful rhetorical tool, aligning the speaker's vision with the cultural ideals and shared values represented by the anthem.

The **ideational metafunction** is evident as the quote articulates a vision for Nigeria characterized by unity and security, echoing the principles embodied in the national anthem. This aligns with the ideational function's focus on how language represents and construes meaning, showcasing how political aspirations are intertwined with cultural symbols.

Within the **interpersonal metafunction**, the strategic use of cultural intertextuality fosters a connection with the audience. By invoking the national anthem, Obi taps into the shared cultural identity and values, creating a sense of shared purpose and national pride. This aligns with the interpersonal function's emphasis on language used to establish relationships and express shared attitudes.

Regarding the **textual metafunction**, the intertextual reference to the national anthem contributes to the coherence and thematic unity of the discourse. The repetition of key phrases from the anthem enhances the rhythmic quality of the discourse, making it memorable and reinforcing the speaker's commitment to the cultural ideals.

Examining the **lexicogrammatical choices**, the deliberate use of terms like "United," "Secure," and the specific phrases from the national anthem reflect a careful selection of language to convey an aspirational political agenda.

In terms of **register and genre**, the language employed is formal, aligning with a political discourse that outlines a desired future for the nation. The use of cultural intertextuality contributes to a persuasive and inspirational register, consistent with the genre of political speeches aimed at rallying public support.

Within the **contexts of situation**, the quote is situated within the broader context of political discourse, where leaders articulate their visions for the nation. The invocation of the national anthem places the discourse in the context of shared cultural symbols, aligning the speaker's political agenda with the broader aspirations and values of the Nigerian people.

In summary, Peter Obi's quote utilizes cultural intertextuality by incorporating phrases from the national anthem to convey a vision for a united and secure Nigeria. This analysis builds upon the previously identified intertextual strategies, showcasing how such references serve to establish connections with the audience, convey shared values, and appeal to national sentiments within the context of political discourse. The use of intertextuality, in this case, reinforces the strategic alignment of political messages with the cultural and emotional significance of the national anthem, portraying a concealed depiction of goodwill in the delivery of campaign speeches.

Example 4

“As we say in Naija: ‘*We need a person who sabi road...*’”

See <https://dailypost.ng/2023/02/23/presidential-election-this-is-what-im-thinking-peter-obi-addresses-nigerians-full-speech/>

At the **interpersonal metafunction** level, the inclusive pronoun "we" establishes a direct connection with the audience, creating a sense of shared identity and concerns. Simultaneously, the colloquial term "Naija" contributes to a feeling of camaraderie, fostering a relational rapport between the speaker and the Nigerian populace.

Within the **ideational metafunction**, the phrase articulates a distinct idea about the qualities required in a leader. "We need a person who sabi road" not only conveys the necessity for a knowledgeable and competent leader but also taps into a broader cultural understanding. The term "Sabi road" extends beyond its literal meaning, embodying the notion of comprehending the intricacies of governance and effectively leading the nation.

On the **textual metafunction** level, the structure of the quote is notable for its clarity and coherence. The common saying from "Naija" introduces a relatable cultural context, followed by the specific assertion of needing a leader who "sabi road," thereby contributing to the overall textual flow and persuasiveness. Additionally, the use of intertextuality, as seen in the colloquial term "Naija," links the discourse to a broader cultural context.

From a **lexicogrammatical** perspective, the use of pidgin English aligns with linguistic accessibility, making the discourse relatable to a wider audience, particularly the masses. The choice of the phrase "sabi road" reflects not just linguistic preferences but also cultural nuances, signifying a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Nigeria.

In terms of **register and genre**, the informal tone introduced by the use of pidgin English contributes to a conversational register. This aligns with the genre of political discourse, allowing the speaker to effectively communicate a vision for the country while maintaining a relatable and approachable demeanour.

Within the **context of situation**, the quote is situated in a political discourse setting where Peter Obi communicates his vision for leadership in Nigeria. The colloquial term "Naija" places the discourse within the cultural context of Nigeria, appealing to a shared sense of national identity and experiences.

In summary, the popular pidgin phrase “we need a person who sabi road” used by Obi in the Nigerian discourse setting presents him as a “messiah” figure to the suffering masses through its linguistic accessibility, cultural significance, acknowledgement of their struggles, and association with the notion of a capable leader who can navigate the challenges facing the country. This

intertextual approach effectively positions Obi as a candidate who can bring about positive change and engender hope among the Nigerian populace.

Historical Intertextuality

Example 5

“However, permit me a little indulgence here, to relate what we are embarking on to the ancient Battle of Thermopylae, where the Greek forces, conscious of fighting for the life of Greece, held on against great odds in the defence of their country.”

See <https://punchng.com/ill-return-nigeria-to-rightful-owners-jubilant-obi-makes-five-promises/?amp>

At the **interpersonal metafunction** level, Obi's choice of referencing the battle of Thermopylae serves to establish a profound connection with the Nigerian populace. By likening the struggle to the ancient battle, he positions himself as a leader who understands and shares in the challenges faced by the people. This deliberate engagement fosters a sense of collective identity, portraying Obi as a political figure deeply aligned with the aspirations and struggles of the masses.

The **ideational metafunction** unfolds through the symbolic representation of resilience and sacrifice embedded in the reference to Thermopylae. Obi strategically draws parallels between the historical context of the Spartan warriors and the contemporary struggles of the Nigerian people. This linguistic symbolism not only underscores the challenges faced by the masses but also positions Obi as a leader willing to make sacrifices for the greater good, portraying a commitment to their welfare and a shared sense of determination.

Within the **textual metafunction**, the choice to draw upon historical imagery contributes to the coherence and persuasiveness of Obi's discourse. The reference to Thermopylae serves as a rhetorical device, enhancing the thematic unity of the speech. The historical allusion acts as a bridge between past and present, creating a narrative thread that strengthens the overall communicative impact of Obi's message.

On the **lexicogrammatical** level, the selection of the Battle of Thermopylae as a reference point reflects Obi's linguistic competence and historical awareness. The deliberate choice of this historical event showcases a nuanced use of language, suggesting a leader who is not only adept in communication but also possesses a deep understanding of history. This linguistic competence contributes to the construction of Obi's political identity as an informed and capable leader.

Regarding **register and genre**, the reference to Thermopylae introduces an element of historical gravitas and solemnity to the discourse. This choice aligns with the genre of political oratory, where leaders often draw upon historical narratives to convey a sense of purpose and gravity. The

register becomes both formal and inspirational, emphasizing the significance of the struggle and the transformative potential of effective leadership.

Lastly, within the **context of situation**, Obi's reference to Thermopylae is situated in the political discourse of Nigeria, a context marked by socioeconomic challenges and political complexities. The choice to draw on historical imagery becomes a strategic move in this context, allowing Obi to communicate a vision for leadership that resonates with the historical and contemporary struggles of the nation. This contextualization contributes to the relevance and impact of Obi's discourse within the specific sociopolitical landscape of Nigeria.

In summary, Peter Obi's use of the battle of Thermopylae unfolds as a sophisticated linguistic strategy across the five levels of SFL analysis. The deliberate engagement at the interpersonal level, the strategic use of symbolism within the ideational metafunction, the cohesive and thematic contribution within the textual metafunction, the nuanced lexicogrammatical choices, and the alignment with the appropriate register and genre collectively serve to position Obi as a political figure deeply connected to the Nigerian populace, capable of leading the nation through its challenges. This analysis sheds light on the multifaceted linguistic and rhetorical dimensions of Obi's discourse, providing insights into the construction of his political identity within the specific sociopolitical context of Nigeria.

Indirect Intertextuality (Implicit Intertextuality).

Example 6



Picture Source: Official Facebook Page

At the **interpersonal metafunction** level, Obi employs the phrase "We come in peace" to convey a message of goodwill and peaceful intent. This choice establishes a direct connection with the audience, aligning his arrival and engagements in Abeokuta, Ogun State, with the biblical concept of greeting others with peace. The intertextual reference to the instructions given by Jesus to his disciples creates a resonance with cultural and religious values, portraying Obi as a leader who approaches the political landscape with benevolence rather than hostility.

Within the **ideational metafunction**, the phrase serves as a linguistic strategy to communicate the non-threatening nature of Obi's visit and political activities. By referencing the biblical concept of extending peace, Obi underscores his commitment to engaging in peaceful activities, such as rallies, without posing a threat to the security and well-being of the state. This ideational choice reinforces a narrative of peaceful political participation, aligning with cultural norms that value non-confrontational discourse.

In terms of the **textual metafunction**, the strategic use of the phrase contributes to the coherence and thematic unity of the discourse. It serves as a bridge between the announcement of Obi's arrival and the explanation of his peaceful intent, creating a logical and persuasive flow. The intertextual reference to peace also adds a layer of familiarity and resonance to the text, enhancing its overall effectiveness in conveying the intended message.

On the **lexicogrammatical** level, the deliberate use of the phrase "We come in peace" reflects Obi's linguistic competence and cultural awareness. This choice draws on shared cultural knowledge, incorporating biblical references that are likely to resonate with a significant portion of the audience. The lexicogrammatical choices contribute to the creation of a diplomatic and conciliatory register, aligning with the genre of political communication that seeks to establish a positive rapport with the audience.

Regarding **register and genre**, the tone set by the phrase aligns with a diplomatic register, emphasizing peaceful intentions and cooperation. The genre of the discourse is political communication, and Obi strategically uses intertextual references to convey his message within the broader cultural and religious context of the Nigerian audience.

In the **context of situation**, Obi's use of intertextual references is a strategic move within the sociopolitical landscape of Ogun State. Recognizing the state's status as predominantly an opposition stronghold, Obi employs the salutation of peace to disarm potential provocation and foster an atmosphere of trust. This contextualization demonstrates a keen awareness of the specific sociopolitical dynamics in Ogun State, influencing Obi's linguistic choices.

In conclusion, Peter Obi's discourse exhibits a nuanced and strategic use of linguistic elements within the SFL framework. The analysis across the five levels reveals a deliberate effort to establish a connection with the audience, convey a message of peaceful intent, and navigate the sociopolitical landscape of Ogun State through culturally resonant and intertextual references. This linguistic approach serves as a powerful tool in shaping perceptions, establishing connections, and communicating political ideas in a compelling and culturally relevant manner.

Example 7



Picture Source: Official Facebook Page

At the **interpersonal metafunction** level, Obi's phrase reflects a shared sentiment of hope and anticipation. The choice of "Nigeria's morning will soon come" communicates a positive outlook, creating a connection with the audience by expressing a collective belief in the potential for a brighter future. This interpersonal function serves as a rhetorical device to align the speaker with the aspirations and optimism of the Nigerian people.

Within the **ideational metafunction**, the quote signifies a thematic parallel with Achebe's work, both expressing a belief in the possibility of positive change. Obi's phrase conveys the idea that, despite challenges, a transformative period is imminent for Nigeria. This aligns with Achebe's theme of a new beginning and the continuous process of growth. The ideational metafunction in this context underscores the shared belief in the nation's potential for renewal and progress.

On the **textual metafunction** level, the choice of metaphorical language, such as "morning," contributes to the coherence and thematic unity of the discourse. The metaphorical reference creates a narrative thread that enhances the persuasive impact of the message. The use of this metaphor also connects with Achebe's metaphorical expression, "Morning Yet on Creation Day," reinforcing a thematic consistency and creating resonance within the discourse.

From a **lexicogrammatical** perspective, the phrase's construction reflects a deliberate choice of language to convey optimism and possibility. The use of "Nigeria's morning" employs the nation as a metaphorical entity, emphasizing a collective destiny. The phrase "will soon come" introduces a temporal element, indicating the imminent arrival of a positive change. These lexicogrammatical choices contribute to the construction of a forward-looking and aspirational linguistic framework. In terms of **register and genre**, the phrase adopts a register of hope and optimism. This choice aligns with the genre of political discourse, where leaders often employ positive and forward-looking language to inspire and mobilize the public. The genre of the discourse, in this case, is characterized by a political rally or statement, and the register is tailored to evoke a sense of collective optimism and anticipation.

Lastly, the **context of situation** plays a crucial role in understanding the strategic use of this phrase. Positioned within the sociopolitical landscape of Nigeria, where hope for positive change is a prevalent sentiment, Obi's choice of language becomes a strategic move. It caters to the prevailing desires and expectations of the Nigerian people, especially considering the historical and contemporary challenges faced by the nation.

In conclusion, the SFL analysis reveals a sophisticated use of language by Peter Obi in crafting a message that resonates with the Nigerian populace. Across the five levels, the discourse strategically employs linguistic elements to convey hope and anticipation, creating thematic parallels with Achebe's work. This analysis sheds light on the intricacies of language use in political communication, where linguistic choices are calibrated to establish connections, convey optimism, and align with the sociopolitical context of the nation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has systematically analyzed the language used in political discourse, focusing on statements made by Peter Obi, a Nigerian politician. The analytical framework, rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), explored three metafunctions (interpersonal, ideational, and textual), lexicogrammar, register and genre, and the context of situation. The findings reveal nuanced ways in which language is strategically wielded to convey political messages, connect with cultural references, and resonate with diverse audiences.

At the interpersonal level, the study highlighted how language establishes connections with the audience, portraying Obi as a leader in tune with the sentiments of the Nigerian people. In terms of ideational function, the analysis showcased linguistic choices that convey complex meanings and thematic concerns, drawing parallels between Obi's statements and Chinua Achebe's literary works, particularly in expressions of hope.

Exploring the textual metafunction, the study revealed how language is organized for coherence and thematic unity. Metaphorical expressions, such as "Nigeria's morning will soon come,"

created a narrative thread that strengthened the overall impact. Delving into lexicogrammatical choices, the analysis uncovered strategic language use to evoke cultural references, align with the sociopolitical context, and project relatability to diverse linguistic communities within Nigeria. The examination of register and genre demonstrated how linguistic choices adapt to specific contexts and audience expectations, particularly in inspiring hope and a shared identity in political discourse. Lastly, considering the context of situation underscored the strategic nature of linguistic choices within the unique sociopolitical landscape of Nigeria.

In summary, this study provides insights into how language operates within political discourse. Through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics, the analyses illuminate the deliberate and strategic use of language by Peter Obi. This research contributes to a broader understanding of the dynamic and influential role of language in shaping political narratives, identities, and aspirations within a cultural and sociopolitical context.

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