



THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A STUDY OF ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES OF TWO PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANTS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the language of political discourse with focus on the linguistic features of two important political speeches made by two presidential aspirants in Nigeria – Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and General Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd.) of the All Progressive Congress (APC). The study aims to highlight the strategies employed by the speakers to communicate their ideologies and achieve effective persuasion at lexical and syntactic levels. This work adopted Crystal and Davy (1985) linguistic descriptive and discursive approach to language analysis. The method is deemed appropriate because it allows analyst to explain the structure of language as used in a given context rather than analysing language based on how it ought to be used. The analysis of data at lexical level reflects the resources employed by the speakers which include apt register, subject specific items, personal pronoun referencing and endearing items, among others. The analysis of data at syntactic level also highlights the strategies the speakers employed which include syntactic inversions, the use of parallel and compound structures, subordination, the manipulation of interrogatives and declaratives, among others. Information from the study reveals that the choice of the linguistic resources contributed to the effective communication of the semantic and persuasive import of the speeches. Beyond reflecting how the individual speakers manipulated language resources to convey their ideologies, the study demonstrates how users of a language can manipulate resources from the repertoire available to them to achieve strategic and communicative competence.

Key Words: discourse, political, lexis, syntax, speech and persuasion

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INTRODUCTION

Speech is a formal talk that a person usually gives before an audience. There are different kinds of speeches which are usually spontaneous and often transmitted through a medium. Among other

functions, speech is a useful social tool which can be used to develop relationships and convey attitudes and opinions directly (Thorne, 1997). This means that every speech is delivered for a purpose and language serves as the primary tool of expression.

Hence, the ability to influence the audience depends on the speaker's use of language to transmit his message; the power of a speech largely depends on language choices of the speaker. Political speeches are usually powerful. Politicians are noted for their ability to use language to acquire and manage power. The language of politicians is characterised by their ability to manipulate the linguistic resources available in the code to sell their political ideologies and manifestoes to the electorates. The linguistic manipulation inherent in the language of politics lends credence to the scholarly attention which it attracts.

Linguistic manipulation as defined by Rozina and Karapetjana (2009) is the conscious use of language in a devious way to control others. It can be considered also as an influential instrument of political rhetoric because political discourse is primarily focused on persuading people to take specified political actions or to make crucial political decisions. The success of a politician to some extent depends on his ability to influence the attitudes or behaviours of the audience or electorates. The Essays (2013) refers to language as the principal tool which politicians use to achieve persuasion and as such language of politics offers much in the way of linguistic analysis. The language of politicians is bound to reflect on the inherent power in their manipulation of lexis and syntax to persuade and motivate. From the specific words required for war time, to the promotion of a political agenda or the need to expose injustice, political speakers employ the many and various linguistic devices within their textual structure to argue and persuade effectively. Thus, language becomes a powerful and emotive stimulant, dangerous in the hands of a skilled orator with an ambivalent or perilous personal agenda (The Essay, 2013).

Political discourse could be explained as any spoken or written text dealing with political issues (Van Dijk, 1995). It involves a wide and diverse set of discourses, genres, registers such as: policy papers, ministerial speeches, government press releases or press conferences, parliamentary discourse, party manifestos (or platforms), electoral speeches, and so forth (Al-Faki, 2014). Irrespective of the genre, political discourse is characterised by the fact that it

is spoken or written by (or for) primary political actors — members of the government or the opposition, members of parliament, leaders of political parties, candidates in office. One important identifying variable is the actor — an important politician. Political discourse entails a formal address delivered by a politician at a political forum/gathering. In this vein, political campaign speeches delivered by aspirants to the electorates in order to win their votes serve as examples of political discourse.

The study of political discourse focuses on text and speeches of professional politicians or political institutions such as president and prime ministers and other members of government parliament or political parties both at the local, national and international levels. Thus, this study on the linguistic features of acceptance speeches of two presidential aspirants in Nigeria at the lexical and syntactic levels suffices as example of linguistic analysis of a political discourse.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the linguistic features of political speeches at lexical and syntactic features. The speeches were delivered by two presidential candidates for the 2015 elections in Nigeria. Each of them presented a speech after emerging as the flag bearer of his party at the occasion of the party's national conventions. We note here that though the speeches were presented at a similar occasion but the dates and venue of presentation differ.

To realize the aim of this study, the following specific objectives were formulated:

- (i) To identify the linguistic features of the speeches and in particular, the dominant and syntactic features in the two selected political speeches;
- (ii) To discuss the effects of the lexical choices and syntactic manipulations in political speeches on the audience and on the language in use.

Research Questions

In order to realize the formulated objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

- (i) What are the prevalent lexical and syntactic features in the two political speeches?

- (ii) What effects do lexical choices and syntactic manipulations in political speeches create on the audience and on the language?

Justification for the Study

An examination of the linguistic manipulations inherent in political discourse stands to be of significance to the academia and to the general society. The present Nigerian political space is fraught with fierce campaigning and selling of political ideology to the masses by the two dominant political parties in Nigeria. The overall aim is to gain the attention and patronage of a broad section of the electorates and to ultimately win the polls. Campaigning is largely achieved through the medium of communication in any democratic society like Nigeria. This study which aims to examine the language of political discourse is bound to provide insights on the language of politics and the strategies that are used to achieve persuasive and forceful speeches in this context. Information from the study will, thus, provide insights on language usage in electioneering. This also has pedagogic relevance as it can be used to teach register, speech writing and public speaking.

Information on English language usage from this study will also contribute to the information data bank on the richness and dynamism of English, the dominant language of communication in this context in meeting various communication ends in Nigeria.

The way people use language to achieve communication is a continuous question in language studies. This study highlights how the politicians manipulate language resources to achieve communicative and strategic competence in language usage. It can also stand as an example to show the art of argumentation.

Methodology

In order to carry out the study, Linguistic descriptive approach advocated by Crystal and Davy (1985) was adopted. This approach involves investigation at each linguistic level which includes phonetics and phonology, lexis, syntax and semantics. However, this present study focuses attention on the lexical and syntactic levels. The study, therefore, adopts the descriptive and discursive approach to highlight the lexical choices and syntactic strategies that the

speakers used in their speeches and to explain the import of the forms on the overall meaning and effect of the speeches on the audience. Descriptive approach allows analysts to explain how language is used in a given context rather than how it is supposed to be used (Yule, 2006).

Sources of Data

Data for the study consist of two political speeches delivered at two different but related political forums – the acceptance speech of the elected presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and the acceptance speech of the All Progressive Candidate, General Muhammad Buhari (Rtd). Both speeches were delivered respectively at the conventions of the two parties to elect presidential candidates. The speeches were both obtained from the internet.

The acceptance speech of the presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan was downloaded from <http://thewillnigeria.com/news/president-goodluck-jonathans-acceptance-speech-at-the-pdp-2014-national-convention/> while the acceptance speech of the presidential candidate of the All Progressive Congress, General Muhammad Buhari (Rtd.) was downloaded from <http://www.nigerianmuse.com/20141212203101zg/elections-2015/acceptance-speech-by-general-muhammadu-buhari-gcfr-presidential-candidate-of-apc/>. The speeches were subjected to analysis without manipulation of any kind.

Clarification on Linguistic Analysis

Language as a medium of communication is structured at various levels in the bid to achieve the purpose of communication in a given context. Crystal and Davy (1985) suggest the following levels of analysis, which are graphology, phonetics and phonology, lexis/vocabulary, syntax and semantics. Similarly, Radford (1989) opines that the ability to make judgement about well-formedness and structure of language holds at four major linguistic levels – phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Morphology in this instance, encapsulates the lexical/vocabulary analysis. However, it follows that a native speaker's syntactic competence is often reflected in his intuitions about

the grammaticality on the one hand, and their syntactic structure on the other.

This study as earlier stated restricts its analysis to two levels – the lexical and syntactic. A major rationale for the study is to show how speakers, in this context, politicians are able to effectively manage political discourse to incite patronage and support from their party members and the electorates. Of the levels of analysis, the identified levels – lexis and syntax appear to vividly capture the choices and the strategies, which the speakers utilized to achieve loyalty, patronage and often times aggressive support from their party members as well as the general public.

The concept, lexis, according to Matthews (1997) refers to the vocabulary of a language and the study of vocabulary. In the early 1960s, Halliday opines that lexis involves relations such as collocations among open classes of words as opposed to closed systems of what was to become systemic grammar. Lexis as a linguistic category, which falls under word construction and meaning, is generally defined as the total word stock and usage that depends on choice and appropriateness (Trick, 2011). The presence of multi-word lexical items in the lexis is what differentiates it from vocabulary – the collection of only single words. Trick (2011) further explains that lexis means the vocabulary of a language as opposed to other aspects such as the grammar of the text. Lexis is clearly an important aspect of creating a suitable style or register (i.e. when choosing language and language features to suit a particular genre, context, audience and purpose).

Syntax on the other hand is the branch of linguistics which is concerned with the study of the structure of sentences and the ordering of its elements (Kamil, 2007). The word 'syntax' is derived from a Greek word which translates to mean togetherness or arrangement (Kamil, 2007). The syntactic level of analysis deals with the study of the structure of sentences, that is, how words are arranged or combined to form larger stretches such as phrases, clauses and sentences. Syntax is the part of grammar that governs the form of strings by which language users make statements, ask questions, give directives, and so on (Finegan, 2008). The study of

syntax addresses the structure of sentences and their structural and functional relationships to one another. Thus, syntax provides rules for arrangement of words to express intents or thoughts (Finegan, 2008). It also entails that the user's sequencing of words suggests his communicative intent.

The sequencing of words is key in syntactic analysis. McGregor (2009) explains that in all human languages, words can be put together in sequences to express meanings for which no separate words exists: the range of complexities and nuances of meanings that a speaker/writer might want to express – and distinguish from other possible meanings – is much larger than can be expressed by the lexical and morphological resources of any language. McGregor (2009) points out that words and morphology alone are insufficient to mark all the complex meanings and meaning distinctions people regularly need to make in thought and communication. But, syntax is concerned with the means available in languages for putting words together in sequences. Sometimes the term grammar is interchanged with syntax, though more usually grammar is considered to cover not just syntax but also morphology and often phonology and semantics as well.

Data Analysis

As stated in the introduction, samples of lexical items and expressions in the acceptance speeches of the two major opposing political parties provide data for the study. The focus of this study as stated earlier is to examine the effectiveness of the linguistic forms employed in achieving the semantic and persuasive import of the texts. In general terms, the two speeches share similar register and purpose, but the variations that exist in the choice of forms and ideology of each of the speakers were highlighted in the course of the analysis. The lexical items used in the two speeches revolve around politics. The audience or the participants in the two political discourses are primarily the party delegates, but the speeches are usually published to a wider audience across time and space. The occasion is formal, the speeches exhibit little or no features of informal discourse. The focus of the two speeches also represents the divergent political ideology of

the party flag bearers. The speeches covered different topics in the course of persuasion.

Data on Lexical Features of Political Discourse

i. Register of Politics

The lexical items used in the two speeches reflect register of politics. The analysis of the two speeches revealed that both candidates employed variety of lexical items dealing with the issue at hand – appreciating the party for nominating them as well as convincing the audience of their suitability as their representative. Being speeches presented at the related political forum (party convention), the vocabulary relate and often overlap. However, the speeches contain lexical items from varied subjects as the two speeches touched on various issues affecting public lives. The lexical choices of the two aspirants are subject specific lexemes characterizing political discourse also highlight their knowledge of politics.

Prevalent in the General Buhari's speech are: *party, leadership, convention, democracy, election, country, nation, administration, President, presidential, govern/government, economy, infrastructure, transportation, agriculture, etc*

Prevalent in Dr. Goodluck Jonathan's speech are: *President, party, nation, convention, democracy, congresses, legislative, PDP, campaign, election, candidate, governors, federal, state, administration, development, infrastructure, power, etc.*

The fact that some of the lexemes are similar indicates that political speeches are characterized by peculiar lexemes and register. Though the two speeches were planned separately, the lexical items are similar because they deal with the similar topic (acceptance speech) and were delivered at similar forum (party convention). Lexical collocations are also noted. The words in collocation include: aspirant and candidate, campaign and election; administration and government, democracy party and, convention and election and so on. The lexemes above tend to occur in the same environment.

The lexical items that were used in the speeches relate to politics but not restricted to any political ideology. The apt use of subject specific items highlights the knowledge of the speakers on issues

relating to politics and governance. Both of them have occupied the presidential seat they were vying for. Their choice of language forms demonstrates their communicative competence in dealing with the subject at hand.

ii. Honorific and Endearing Items

The two speakers employed honorific items extensively in their various speeches. The items were used at the introduction in greetings – in acknowledging the dignitaries at the occasion and in various other parts of the speech. Prevalent in the protocol of General Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC) are honorific items denoting titles and positions:

The National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, National leaders the APC, Members of the National Executive Council of the APC, *Your Excellencies*, State Governors, *Distinguished Senators, Honourable Members of the House Representatives and Assemblies, the Chairman and Members of the Convention Committee, State and Local Government Chairmen of the APC, Distinguished Delegates*

In the excerpt above, the addressees are distinguished by their positions in the party or in Government by the use of honorific adjectives – 'Your Excellencies' 'Distinguished Senators' 'Honourable Members'. In the speech, personal names are obscured. One of the aims of obscuring the names is to accord recognition to positions of authority and thereby boost the ego of the addressee. The roll call reflects the dignitaries in attendance also give importance to the occasion.

This form of language usage is also evident in the speech of the incumbent President, who is seeking for a second tenure, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) but in a varied style. He sparsely used honorific but employed more of endearing items – 'dear', 'enthusiastic and dedicated party members' and personal and possessive pronouns, which encapsulates brotherhood and togetherness. His protocol in

greeting is not elaborate like the one of the All Progressive candidates.

Mr Chairman, our dear delegates, today is another day in the history of our great party; The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and indeed in the history of our great nation

The two speakers also employed several of political title names in the body of the speeches but with some differences. The introductory protocol of greeting in the speech of General Muhammadu Buhari was elaborate enough to recognise almost all the stakeholders of the party. On the other hand, introductory greeting protocol of President Goodluck Jonathan's speech was concise and condensed. All the other dignitaries except the party chairman were recognised as 'dear delegates'. Delegates in this context encapsulate every party member that voted at the convention even the president himself. The president in the third paragraph of the speech also referred to himself as a delegate. The differences in the usage of items in greeting also suggest the disposition of the two candidates towards their colleagues. The mood and the tone of the speech of the incumbent appears to be more confident and relaxed with fellow party members while the mood and tone of the opposition party appear to be more appealing for acceptance by fellow party members. Their language usage reflects strategic competence.

iii. Personal Pronouns and Kinship Terms

Both candidates used the plural personal pronouns 'we' which echoes to 'our' in order to show connection, collectivism and unity of purpose. General Buhari (Rtd.) in the following excerpt avers:

We shall institute just policies that afford people the dignity of work and pay them a living wage for their sweat and toil. We intend to do this by instituting a national industrial policy, coupled with a national employment directive, that together shall revive and expand our manufacturing sector, creating jobs for our urban population and decreasing our reliance on expensive foreign imports(paragraph 25).

President Goodluck Jonathan in his speech also made copious use of personal and possessive pronouns for similar purposes:

Fellow delegates, dear party members, while we congratulate our candidates who have emerged at the primaries, we must reassure all our members, that our party remains a large, accommodating and responsible party (paragraph 11)

Both candidates made use of collective pronouns to distant themselves as individuals in order to create sense of unity and collective responsibility under the umbrella of their parties. We note that this feature is more predominant in the speech of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan where the pronouns are used 179 times in a speech of 101 paragraphs. His speech also shows a shift in the use of kinship terms as he addressed the Vice President of Nigeria, Architect Namadi Sambo with a kinship term, 'my dear brother'.

The two candidates also spoke in their positions as presidential candidates of their party to indicate personal responsibility. The first person pronoun singular 'I' was used by the two candidates to make personal or individual stance. The excerpt below reflects such usage in the speech of President Goodluck Jonathan.

I will give my all. I will not let you down. I will not fail the PDP. I will not fail you. Above all, I promise, I will not fail our great nation, Nigeria (paragraph 20-24).

The statement above indicates the responsibilities that rest on the speaker. The APC flag bearer also used the personal pronoun but in a different sense. I pledge to do my utmost to make this happen but cannot do it alone. I need your support. I need your help to become President of Nigeria so that government may come to serve you, so that it may bring relief to the broken and weary among us and so that it may usher in a new Nigeria meant for us all, a Nigeria that is the birthright of everyone but the exclusive possession of no one.

The use of the first person pronoun 'I' by General Buhari (Rtd.) conveys an impassionate plea for help while President Goodluck Jonathan used the personal pronoun 'I' to emphasis his readiness to lead the party.

Data on Syntactic Features

i. Parallelism

Parallelism or parallel structure is a grammatical device used in speech or writing to create effect through repetition of a sentence or parts of it. The repetition evokes emotion of the audience because it creates rhythmic flow. According to Al-Faki (2014), politicians often use parallelism when they want to draw attention to a particular part of their message and make it stand out from the rest of the speech. Through this device, several ideas are expressed in a series of the same or similar structures. This can serve to emphasize that the ideas are equal in importance and can add a sense of symmetry and rhythm, which makes the speech more memorable. The two speeches which provide data for analysis demonstrate the predominant use of this strategy. The excerpt below shows the use of parallel structure by General Muhammadu Buhari:

We will govern Nigeria honestly, in accordance with the constitution will strive to secure the country and efficiently manage the economy.

We will strive to attack poverty through broadly-shared economic growth and attacking corruption through impartial application of the law.

We will tolerate no religious, regional, and ethnic or gender bias in our Government

We will return Nigeria to a position of international respect through patriotic foreign policy.

We will choose the best Nigerians for the right jobs (paragraph 22).

The excerpt below also exemplifies the prevalence of parallelism in President Good Luck Jonathan's speech.

We will campaign in peace.

We will campaign with hope in our hearts.

We will campaign on the facts and the truth.

We will campaign with issues and ideas.

We will campaign on our record of performance.

We will campaign to win(paragraph 88-93).

We are a Party that accepts challenges.

We can continue to build upon the foundations **we** have laid so far, *we can* continue with our economic progress, *we can* continue improving our infrastructure, *we can* continue delivering better health care, *we can* continue to improve our agriculture and *we can* continue to safeguard individual liberties and freedoms(paragraph 16)

The two candidates used parallel structure as persuasion strategies. General Muhammadu Buhari as a candidate of the opposition party used this device to convince his party members or delegates that the ruling party has failed and to assert that if elected, their party will put right what the ruling party has failed to do. President Goodluck Jonathan on the other hand persuades his party members to believe that they have done well. The repetition of the same or similar structures yielded to the rhythmic flow of the argument. It serves to evoke the emotion of the audience towards .

ii. Antithesis

Antithesis according to Encyclopaedia Britannica is derived from Greek word *antitheton* which means opposition. It is a figure of speech in which irreconcilable opposites or strongly contrasting ideas are placed in sharp juxtaposition and sustained tension. The opposing clauses, phrases, or sentences are roughly equal in length and balanced in contiguous grammatical structures. Antithesis is also defined as a rhetorical device which implies contrast and it is achieved by placing two opposite things to appeal to emotions. It plays on the complementary property of opposites to create one vivid picture. The purpose of using antithesis in texts is to create a balance between opposite qualities and to lend a greater insight into the subject. Only one incidence of the use of antithesis was identified in each speech.

The use of antithesis in the speech of General Muhammadu Buhari' (Rtd.) can be seen in the excerpt below:

What I say today is for all Nigerians: *Christian and Muslim, Southerners and Northerners, rich and poor, young and old, man and woman.* We are all citizens of Nigeria. There is no dividing line among us that I care to honour. *Either we advance as one or fail altogether* (paragraph 10).

In the lines above, he sought to persuade the audience to accept his promise that his government will cater for all. General Buhari used this contrasting device to convince the audience that his party will remain committed to serve one Nigeria irrespective religion, region, age, or sex.

President Goodluck Jonathan's speech also contains antithesis as exemplified in the statement below:

The choice before Nigerians in the coming election is simple: *A choice between going forward or going backwards; between the new ways and the old ways; between freedom and repression; between a record of visible achievements and beneficial reforms – and desperate power-seekers with empty promises* (paragraph 81).

President Goodluck Jonathan employed the above antithesis to persuade the audience. The juxtaposition of the negative and the positive evokes the emotion of the audience. The positive is what the PDP as a party can offer, while the opposition parties can only offer the negative.

iii. Interrogative mood

The Interrogative mood was employed by both candidates as a persuasion strategy. General Muhammadu Buhari used four rhetorical questions to draw the attention of the audience to what he deemed weakness of the present administration.

Shall we at home continue to live in a condition where the Power Holding Company and its successors seem only to have the power to hold us in darkness?

Shall we continue in a situation where 250 of our daughters have been abducted and the government has been unable to rescue them or provide credible information about what steps they are taking?

Shall we live in a nation where several people were trampled to death in search

of jobs in a stadium and yet no one has taken responsibility for the tragedy?

Shall we live in a nation where the ranks of the poor swell and their poverty increase while the consorts of the powerful enjoy unprecedented wealth?

The lives of the poor are bled dry while those of the powerful soak in excessive abundance. My answers to these questions are "No, No, No, No!" (Paragraph 14-18)

The thought provoking questions are posed to evoke the emotions of the audience and directly invite them to judge the present government and to decide on a change of government. The repetition of the negation – 'no' three times is aimed at arousing a persuasive force for a revolution.

President Good Luck Jonathan employed 'yes or no/polar' questions in the rhetorical sense to declare to the party delegates and the general public that his administration has achieved some feats. He posited:

My dear delegates:

Has change not come to our railway system?

Has change not come to our airports?

Has change not come to our roads network?

Has change come to our agricultural sector?

Has change not come to our electoral process?

Has change not come to Almajiri education? (paragraph 53-59)

While the Presidential aspirant of the opposition party posed series of interrogatives to drive his argument on the failure of the ruling party, the flag bearer of the ruling party used interrogatives to project their achievement. Through the use of these questions, the speakers directly invite audience participation. The basic aims are to emphasis points of interest and achieve persuasion. This evinces that interrogative is a veritable strategy of persuasion in political discourse.

iv. Declarative sentences

Declarative mood is used for making statements. Thorne (1997) is of the view that declarative structures can be identified by the position of the

subject in the clause structure. Conventionally, the subject of the sentence usually precedes the verb in a sentence. Where the sentence is complex, the mood is determined by the main clause. In political discourse, declarative sentences are used for making persuasive statements to evoke the emotion of the audience. The aim is to make the audience to drop their ideologies and shift to the speaker's side. The following are examples from General Buhari's speech:

Agriculture remains the backbone of the economy. Our government, when elected, will establish an agricultural policy that provides farmers a dignified living through improved inputs, improved extension services, access to credit and price support mechanisms. (paragraph 27)

We will be a compassionate government, for out of compassion arises the truest forms of wealth and progress a society can attain. We shall open the door to tertiary education to excellent students who otherwise could not afford it. Pregnant and poor women and children shall be entitled to basic health care. (paragraph 30)

Examples of declaratives from the speech of president Good Luck Jonathan are:

We are a Party that accepts challenges. We are a Party that confronts those challenges. But above all, we are a Party that resolves challenges. And it is exactly these qualities that will lead us to victory. (paragraph 16).

We can continue to build upon the foundations we have laid so far, we can continue with our economic progress, we can continue improving our infrastructure, we can continue delivering better health care, we can continue to improve our agriculture and we can continue to safeguard individual liberties and freedoms(paragraph 80).

The declarative utterances of the two different speakers also highlight their position. The flag bearer of the opposition party, APC, uses a futuristic mood 'will' but the flag bearer of the ruling party, PDP,

uses 'can' to demonstrate ability and enforce certainty.

v. **Compounding**

Compounding is another syntactic feature found in the two speeches. Compound sentences consist of two or more independent clauses. It is achieved by joining two or more independent clauses of equal ranks with coordinating conjunctions such as 'and, but, or, so and for'. The analysis revealed that both candidates used compounding to convey two or more distinct information, although connected, in a single sentence. Examples found in the speech of General Muhammadu Buhari include:

We shall institute just policies that afford people the dignity of work *and* pay them a living wage for their sweat and toil. We intend to do this by instituting a national industrial policy, coupled with a national employment directive, that together shall revive *and* expand our manufacturing sector, creating jobs for our urban population *and* decreasing our reliance on expensive foreign imports (paragraph 25)

President Goodluck Jonathan also used coordinated structures in his speech. Consider the excerpt below.

Nigeria is undergoing great changes at this time, *and* also experiencing great challenges; *so*, political parties must rise above the fray, to provide hope and clear direction, to propel the development of our country (paragraph 7).

There is much to say, *but* permit me some special words of gratitude. These last four years have not always been easy, *but* through it all, my wife has effortlessly taken care of our home. So to you, my companion *and* my foremost supporter, I thank you from the bottom of my heart (Paragraph 31)

vi. **Subordination**

Subordination in grammar refers to the process of joining linguistic units that are not of the same status. A subordinate clause extends or complements the meaning of an independence clause. In a sentence, subordinate clause depends on the independent clause. There are several incidences

in the two speeches. The following are examples from General Buhari's speech:

I understand and accept the hard challenge ahead. *When all is said and done*, let it be written that Muhammadu Buhari gave his all for this nation. *As such*, I make these five pledges regarding the government *if we are elected next February*; Our government will be committed to the cause of the common man. *Whether you are a Christian from Bayelsa State or a Muslim from Katsina State*, you are first and foremost a Nigerian in my eyes (paragraph 21-22)

The following are examples of subordinations drawn from the speech of President Goodluck Jonathan

Fellow delegates, dear party members, *while we congratulate our candidates, who have emerged at the primaries*, we must reassure all our members that our party remains a large, accommodating and responsible party. *After our victory at the polls in 2011*, we articulated a TRANSFORMATION AGENDA, *which we have faithfully implemented*. The agenda has created the framework of our desire to promote and deepen access to economic and social benefits, through equal opportunities (paragraph 48).

vii. Fronting

Fronting, also known as foregrounding is a grammatical device that is used to create effects or dramatic effects. Certain part of a sentence is brought to the subject position for emphasis and prominence. It involves shifting a part of a sentence from its normal position to the beginning of the sentence. The part of the sentence moved to the front might be the object or some other compliment, an adverbial or even the main verb itself (ELT Data base 2007-2014). In other words, it entails giving prominence to an item in a sentence for emphasis and gaining the attention of the audience. The following are samples were identified in the speech of General Muhammadu Buhari:

- (i) *To my fellow contestants*; Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, Owelle Rochas Okorocho

and Mr. Sam Nda Isaiah, I wish to thank you for putting up a good fight.

- (ii) *To you all*, I pay my absolute compliments and congratulate you on the success of your respective campaigns.
- (iii) *In an APC government*, the public will know how much NNPC makes and where all the money goes.
- (iv) *Sadly*, the current administration does not believe in this obligation. By their actions they are leading us to calamity.
- (v) *At international conferences*, the Nigerian delegation is usually among the largest but at the same time the least effective. Our president should have the status and the voice of Africa's largest nation. But in political influence we are among the weakest.

Examples of syntactic inversion/fronting from President Good Luck Jonathan's speech include:

- (i) *For the sake of the entire nation*, we must, at this time, more than ever, stand together as one united party. We are all joint stakeholders, this party belongs to all of us.
- (ii) *In the last 16 years*, the PDP has kept faith with the Nigerian people by promoting and projecting a united nation, under God. We have united our people around common national goals for the good of our citizens and the development of our nation.
- (iii) *At the advent of democracy in 1999*, Nigeria's GDP was 35.9 billion US dollars. Today, it is 510 billion US dollars – and we have become Africa's biggest economy. In 1999, our debt to GDP Ratio was 93.1%. Today, it is 13.6 % of which external debt to GDP ratio is 1.89%.
- (iv) *Without prejudice to various on-going resolution mechanisms*, we will take steps, after the elections to review and refine the candidate selection procedures within our party. An appropriate committee will be set up to

work on this, with contributions across board.

- (v) *Having placed great faith in me and chosen me as your candidate*, I assure you, that I am truly honoured tonight, to lead another electoral contest.

The elements fronted as exhibited from the two speeches are to infinitives, adverbial clauses, prepositional and gerund phrases. Fronting serves many purposes. But, the most common ones are making emphasis and drawing the attention of the audience to basic themes. The basic theme begins with the grammatical subject. The element preceding it is called the added or marked theme which echoes the basic theme introduced by the subject of the sentence. The inversions exhibited from the two speeches above enable the speakers to lay emphasis on the basic theme or draw the audience attention to it.

DISCUSSION

The two speeches differ to some extent in length. The speech by President Good Luck Jonathan is lengthy and elaborate. It consists of 101 paragraphs. A good number of the paragraphs were adequately developed by the use of supporting details. On the other hand, the speech by General Buhari appears short and sketchy as most of the paragraphs were not well developed. The difference in their style could be explained by the background information of the two candidates. General Buhari is of military background characterised by paucity in the use of words, while President Jonathan is of academic background, which involves lengthy discourse.

At the lexical level, the two speakers incorporated the appropriate register. Vocabulary items related to politics and government in general run across the two speeches. Also, the two candidates employed the use of honorific, which include recognition of titles and designations in addressing the dignitaries at the occasion. As noted earlier, there are observable variations in the usage of the two speakers, for example in the use of honorific items, pronominal and kinship terms. It could be dictated from their application however that General Muhammadu Buhari's is appositive, while President Goodluck Jonathan is affirmative.

The speeches reflect the different syntactic manipulations and strategies of the speakers – pronominal reference, parallelism, compounding, subordination interrogative sentences, declaration sentences and syntactic fronting/inversions. Though these features are prevalent in the two speeches, more abounds in President Jonathan's speech. This could be attributed to the fact that his speech is lengthy and more elaborative than that of General Buhari. Parallel structures and interrogatives for example are more common in President Jonathan's speech

The linguistic choices made by the speakers subtly reflect the semantic and emotional import of the speeches. The speech of General Buhari, the Presidential aspirant of the opposition party, APC, reflect linguistic choices that subtly attempt to disparage the administration of the ruling party and a strong persuasion to seek for change through their party. The speech of Dr. Good Luck Jonathan, the presidential aspirant of the ruling party PDP on the other hand adopted a confident tone to defend and affirm that their party has done well and deserve to maintain power. Among other strategies, this stance is clearly shown in their use of interrogatives and parallel structures.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of data for this study, it can be concluded that language of political discourse have distinctive lexis and syntax. The lexical items found in political discourse are characteristic and characterising. Although the two speeches used as samples of data were presented by two distinct individuals with two different backgrounds and orientations, some lexical choices in the speeches overlap. The explanation does not basically rest on the fact that the two speeches deal with the same subject matter, it goes beyond to highlight that to achieve effective communication and communicative competence, a language user need to make appropriate linguistic choice to the subject and context as be able to achieve the communication purpose.

In the speeches, both politicians employed related syntactic manipulations to achieve persuasion. Through the identified syntactic strategies, the two candidates made attempt to make their party

members to maintain their stance, other party members to decline their attitude, drop their ideologies and shift to their side. The linguistic and communicative devices used by the speakers assisted them in gaining effective communication and strategic competence in political discourse.

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Appendix I

Thursday, 11 December 2014 President Goodluck's Acceptance Speech At The PDP Convention Yesterday.
President Goodluck Jonathan has this to say after his party PDP, endorsed him as their 2015 presidential flag bearer.

Acceptance Speech by His Excellency, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR On His Victory at the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) 2014 National Convention Eagle Square, Abuja Wednesday 10th – Thursday 11th December 2014
PROTOCOLS

1. Mr Chairman, our dear delegates, today is another great day in the history of our great Party; The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and indeed in the history of our great Nation.
2. Nothing gives me greater joy, as leader of our party, than such an opportunity as presented today, for direct interaction with so many **enthusiastic and dedicated fellow party members**, and may I add, **all proudly dressed** in our party colours and regalia.
3. It is also my pleasure to be here as a delegate today and I welcome whole heartedly all our delegates, party members and all Nigerians, from across the country and beyond; including those joining us by television and online, as we gather here in the Eagle Square, to reaffirm the noble democratic traditions and foundations, that bind us together.
4. I thank the Party and the Organizing Committee for a successful convention. I thank all the delegates for a smooth nomination process.
5. Let me congratulate, the **Chairman of our great Party, the game changer, Alhaji Ahmed Adamu Muazu**. I have no doubt that the democratic process we have witnessed here today, and his confirmation as Party chairman, are both pointers to the consolidation of democracy in our country as a whole.
6. There is no doubt that his commitment to the ideals of our party, his consistency and hard work, has helped to reposition the party. **And today we are stronger, bigger, and more in tune with the yearnings of our people**. Let me also congratulate Professor Wale Oladipo and Alhaji Adewale Adeyanju whose appointments as National Secretary and National Auditor, respectively, have been ratified at this Convention.

7. Nigeria is undergoing great changes at this time, and also experiencing great challenges; so, political parties must rise above the fray, to provide hope and clear direction, to propel the development of our country.
8. As expected in every contest, especially political contests, the journey to this convention has not been without issues in some constituencies. Indeed, Party Congresses from the ward to state levels, and the legislative and state primaries, have produced both triumphs and some misgivings.
9. Without prejudice to various on-going resolution mechanisms, we will take steps, after the elections to review and refine the candidate selection procedures within our party. An appropriate committee will be set up to work on this, with contributions across board.
10. I commend the efforts of the supervising and appeal committee members, who travelled across the country to conduct and oversee the primaries and congresses. I appreciate also the dedication of the various working committees and special committees engaged in organising and delivering all aspects of the election season programmes.
11. Fellow delegates, dear party members, while we congratulate our candidates who have emerged at the primaries, we must reassure all our members, that our party remains **a large, accommodating and responsible party**.
12. We will make sure that conflicts are amicably resolved and that the genuine interest of every member is respected and assured.
13. As party members, we must be conscious of the responsibility we hold to our Nation. The political party is the vehicle for national organisation, and the PDP is the foremost political party in Nigeria.
14. For the sake of the entire nation, we must, at this time, more than ever, stand together as one united party. We are all joint stake holders, this party belongs to all of us.
15. What we have achieved today should be a lesson to all who care about Nigeria. What we have done exemplifies our unity. What we have done exemplifies our determination. What we have done exemplifies our purpose.
16. We are a Party that accepts challenges. We are a Party that confronts those challenges. But above all, we are a Party that resolves challenges. And it is exactly these qualities that will lead us to victory.
17. Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I stand before you as your humble servant, to accept your nomination as the Presidential candidate of our great Party, the PDP.
18. Having placed great faith in me and chosen me as your candidate, I assure you, that I am truly honoured tonight, to lead another electoral contest.
19. This will be a campaign, and an election, that will serve to consolidate our successes.
20. I will give my all.
21. I will not let you down.
22. I will not fail the PDP.
23. I will not fail you.
24. Above all, I promise, I will not fail our great nation, Nigeria.
25. This convention shows that we are ready.
26. The PDP is ready.
27. Nigerians know we are ready.
28. And today in Abuja, we begin the next phase of our mission.
29. Our mission is to secure Nigeria's future.
30. First of all, let me give gratitude to God Almighty who has sustained the nation.
31. There is much to say, but permit me some special words of gratitude. These last four years have not always been easy, but through it all, my wife has effortlessly taken care of our home. So to you, my companion and my foremost supporter, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.
32. I also want to thank, the Vice President, my brother, Arch Namadi Sambo, and his dear wife. You have both provided loyal support and commitment to this presidency; working with you for our people, has been a pleasure.
33. The work and progress recorded these past four years has been possible because we have had the best team possible. The Ministers, Advisers, Assistants and staff that have formed the Transformation team, have shown great dedication, creativity and loyalty.
34. They have put in extra hours when necessary, and always gone the extra mile to ensure delivery. Today, I thank them fervently for their patriotism and hard work.

35. Our Party, the PDP, has been the foundation of our Transformation Agenda. I thank the Chairman and Party Executive at all levels, the Board of Trustees and National Working Committee, the PDP Governors Forum, Federal and state legislators, Secretariat Staff and volunteers, across the country. You have played your part well, and I am indeed very grateful.

36. It is not a mere coincidence that our National Convention this year starts on the same day as the United Nations World Human Rights Day. This government, led by our Party, has made the respect of human rights and individual freedoms, the cornerstone of our administration.

37. I did say during my declaration on November 11, 2014, that we are proud that no Nigerian has been exiled or imprisoned on our watch, for holding contrary views. We must ensure that we continue to water the tree bearing the fruits of freedom, for our beloved people.

38. In the last 16 years, the PDP has kept faith with the Nigerian people by promoting and projecting a united nation, under God. We have united our people around common national goals for the good of our citizens and the development of our nation.

39. Through its years of office, our great Party, the PDP created the Anti-corruption agencies, that is, the EFCC and the ICPC, the Excess Crude Account, the Pension Reforms, Fiscal Responsibility Regime, the Sovereign Wealth Fund and various privatization programmes.

40. We initiated Debt Relief, the Amnesty Programme, the Presidential Jobs Creation Board, Power Sector Reforms and the National Infrastructure Master-plan; the Nigerian Industrial Revolution Plan, the National Automobile Policy, the Freedom of Information regime, the Nigerian Mortgage Refinancing Company, and the Infrastructure Bank, amongst others.

41. At the advent of democracy in 1999, Nigeria's GDP was 35.9 billion US dollars. Today, it is 510 billion US dollars – and we have become Africa's biggest economy. In 1999, our debt to GDP Ratio was 93.1%. Today, it is 13.6 % of which external debt to GDP ratio is 1.89%.

42. As at 1999, only 400,000 telephone lines were active in our country. Today, we have about 120 million lines, which have created many more jobs for our youths.

43. This administration is also working to revitalize our insurance industry. Compared to other emerging economies, our insurance industry has not achieved its full potential. Today, only 3 million of our citizens are insurance policy holders, and overall insurance penetration is less than 0.5 percent of our GDP. We want to transform this sector, just as we have done for our banking sector and our pensions industry.

44. Our goal is to grow the total insurance premiums in our country from 300 billion naira currently to 1 trillion naira in the next three years. And to increase the number of direct jobs created in this sector from about 30,000 people today to over 100,000 people in the next few years.

45. My brothers and sisters, the PDP as a party has delivered on its promise. In the last decade, it has seen to the largest expansion of the middle class in Africa. Certainly, our Party has a rich history of enduring legacies.

46. For those who defected from the PDP, I enjoin you to tell the truth in your campaigns. Many of the developments in your States were initiated by the PDP. So be honest with the voters and give credit where it is due.

47. In adopting the umbrella as our symbol, we have become the umbrella of the nation. Our politics has not been defined by our differences, but in forging the bond of oneness.

48. After our victory at the polls in 2011, we articulated a TRANSFORMATION AGENDA, which we have faithfully implemented. The agenda has created the framework of our desire to promote and deepen access to economic and social benefits, through equal opportunities.

49. The Transformation Agenda is helping to secure Nigeria's future. Thanks to this Agenda we have remained focused, calculated and measured in our decision-making. We have focused on sustainable gains, rather than quick fixes. We have remained committed to our national maxim of Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress.

50. Today, it is to our collective credit as a nation, that in spite of our challenges, our unity remains solid. All across our nation, the positive gains of the Transformation Agenda are being progressively enjoyed by our people.

51. During this campaign, some office seekers will say it is "time for change", but while they were changing from one name to another and from one party to the other, we had already brought change to Nigeria.

52. My dear delegates,

53. Has change not come to our railway system?

54. Has change not come to our airports?

55. Has change not come to our roads network?
56. Has change not come to our agricultural sector?
57. Has change not come to our electoral process?
58. Has change not come to Almajiri education?
59. Is change not coming to the power sector?
60. Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, what we need today is to consolidate on our gains in order to secure our future.
61. Our focus now must be on the future and not on the past. We have challenges but we are determined to overcome them. And this we will.
62. These last four years, my priority has been in building a strong and stable economy. We have created the enabling environment for businesses to thrive. These are essentials for securing Nigeria's future.
63. Back in 2008 and 2009, the country faced strong economic challenges arising from unstable oil prices, but we confronted it consciously and overcame. As the economic challenges of oil price-fall, looms in the months ahead, Nigeria needs tested hands that will provide certainty, in an uncertain world. We have a strong and capable economic team, which has already worked out strategies to manage the oil price volatility and curtail its effects.
64. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our fight against corruption is on course. Our systematic efforts have been acknowledged and we will do more in the coming years. Corruption degrades development; we will continue this fight, without compromise.
65. In the past four years we have run our administration with respect for the principle of separation of powers between the different arms of government. The judiciary and the legislature have independently and introspectively pursued their own reforms and greater self-expression.
66. With a fresh mandate, we shall push for increased intra-party and bi-partisan harmony, within the legislature, and between the executive and the legislature. The duty of national development must never be hindered by the over-politicization of interests; this is what we owe our people, and our nation.
67. Dear party faithful, beyond security and corruption, there exist environmental challenges, such as desertification, which is threatening the lives of our people, especially in the frontline states of Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara. We have responded most appropriately by implementing the Great Green Wall Programme for which we have released over 16 billion Naira.
68. Our determination to provide a buffer of greenery that will stop the advancement of the desert and reverse the many losses of farmlands and grazing grounds, streams and aquatic life, among others, remains strong. Similar programmes are being implemented to save communities from erosion in the West, East, and the South-South parts of the country.
69. On my watch, the security of all citizens shall continue to be of utmost priority. With the exception of the civil war, never before in the history of our country have we faced the level of threat we see today. I assure all Nigerians that this Government will continue to do whatever is required to provide the security we deserve. It is encouraging that the security situation is improving, and by the grace of God, elections will be conducted in all states of the federation.
70. I call on all Nigerians, irrespective of party or belief, to join me in this fight against insurgency and terror. We must be united. Bickering and quarrels only serve to send the wrong signals to terrorists and insurgents, that we are divided in this fight. More importantly it can also demoralise our dedicated and brave armed forces. This would be wrong. For this reason, we must remain united.
71. I believe that together as a people and with God on our side, we shall defeat terror and emerge an even stronger nation.
72. The experience in many countries shows that there may be a tendency for the escalation of violence in an election year. We must not succumb to blackmail. We must be vigilant – every one of us. Only by united action, can we defeat terrorism.
73. I salute our gallant armed forces and security agencies who are doing their best to keep our people safe. We shall continue to ensure that they have the best in terms of equipment, training and conditions. I appeal to our countrymen and women to provide them with the fullest support, and not to fall victim to those who fan the embers of terror.
74. As a political party, we must rededicate ourselves to the work of securing our future. We are the party of the people, and not just the elite. We must lift the poor out of the depth of want, onto the ladder of prosperity. We will work to ensure that no child suffers from basic needs. We must create equal opportunities for women and

the physically challenged. We must give a voice to all Nigerians.

75. And we can do all this! Nigeria is not a land of despair. We are a people who show commitment and unity of purpose. Just look at how we stood up to the Ebola Virus Disease. We are a hard-working nation. And we will go from strength to strength.

76. Our best days are before us, not behind us. We must continue to move forward.

77. In accepting your nomination as flag bearer for the Presidential Election, I once more accept the challenge to serve our party and nation. I will continue the work we have begun with the Transformation Agenda.

78. I will work to secure Nigeria's future. I will serve with humility and moderation, with simplicity and forthrightness; with openness and inclusiveness, and with firmness and strength. I urge all Nigerians to support me, to finish what we started together.

79. Fellow citizens, what we need, more than anything else, is to secure our country's future, by building, and not by destroying.

80. We can continue to build upon the foundations we have laid so far, we can continue with our economic progress, we can continue improving our infrastructure, we can continue delivering better health care, we can continue to improve our agriculture and we can continue to safeguard individual liberties and freedoms.

81. The choice before Nigerians in the coming election is simple: A choice between going forward or going backwards; between the new ways and the old ways; between freedom and repression; between a record of visible achievements and beneficial reforms – and desperate power-seekers with empty promises.

82. Fellow Delegates, dear Party members, so much is at stake. Let me remind everyone – party leaders, mobilizers, members, men, women and youth – that the hard work has only just started.

83. As your Presidential candidate and Party leader, I hereby commission all delegates and party faithful, as my campaign mobilizers, to take our message of unity and development back to your respective states and communities, and to ensure victory for all candidates of the PDP in the forthcoming elections. Working Together, we will do it!

84. Our political opponents shall assail us with the fury of their desperation to win power. They will use every means – intimidation, false accusations, hostile media and more. Do not descend to their level. We must stay focused on the mission at hand – to secure Nigeria's future.

85. Let me emphasise again, that nobody's political ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian. We must eschew violence, even in the face of the most outrageous acts of desperation.

86. We must make sure our supporters have their voter's cards. We must get them motivated and eager to make their mark. It will be a mark for our children. It will be a mark for a stronger economy. A mark that will secure Nigeria's future.

87. So my dear Party Men and Women, let us take this campaign to every Nigerian, every home and every community.

88. We will campaign in peace.

89. We will campaign with hope in our hearts.

90. We will campaign on the facts and the truth.

91. We will campaign with issues and ideas.

92. We will campaign on our record of performance.

93. We will campaign to win.

94. Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

95. Let me at this point invite to join me on this podium, the Chairman of our great party, Alhaji Ahmed Adamu Muazu; the Chairman of our Board of Trustees, Chief Tony Anenih; the Senate President, Senator David Mark and his wife; my dear brother, the Vice President, Architect Namadi Sambo and his wife, and particularly, my dear wife, the First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan.

96. I seize the opportunity of this occasion to formally announce that as we commence the campaign for the 2015 Presidential elections, Architect Mohammed Namadi Sambo, a loyal and tested partner, a dependable, trustworthy gentleman and a true patriot will be my running mate and Vice Presidential candidate once again.

97. With your continued support and the blessing of God Almighty, Vice President Sambo and I will campaign together to win another resounding victory for our great party in the coming elections.

98. God bless you all.

99. God bless our great Party, the PDP

100. God bless Nigeria
101. I thank you

Appendix II

Full Text of the Acceptance speech by General Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR Presidential Candidate of the All Progressives Congress

Time to rebuild Nigeria

The National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress

National leaders of the APC

Members of the National Executive Council of the APC

Your Excellencies, State Governors

Distinguished Senators

Honourable Members of the House of Representatives and Assemblies

The Chairman and Members of the Convention Committee

State and Local Government Chairmen of the APC

Distinguished Delegates

Members of the Press

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

acceptance:

1. First of all, I wish to express my gratitude to the Chairman and members of the Convention Committee for planning and conducting a hitch-free convention. The same appreciation goes to the chairmen of National and State Executive Councils of our party. Thank you very much for doing an excellent job.
2. I would like to pay tribute to Chief Bisi Akande the first chairman of APC and his National Executive for managing the party in its early stages.
3. I also wish to commend Lagos State Government and state party for hosting this convention. Time was when people feared to come to Lagos. Today, Lagos is the cleanest and dare I say safest city in Nigeria. This achievement is due to the leadership and strength of purpose of Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and Chief Babatunde Fashola the two Governors since 1999 and their team of professionals for this wonderful transformation Nigeria greets you!
4. The outcome of the presidential primaries of the All Progressives Congress is a demonstration of democracy at work. It is testimony to the fact that democracy as a concept is greater than the interests of individuals in a free and functional political system. What has just happened is not about winning or losing but about the triumph of liberty, freedom of choice and association, which are hallmarks of democracy.
5. To my fellow contestants; Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, Owelle Rochas Okorocha and Mr. Sam Nda Isaiah, I wish to thank you for putting up a good fight. The keenly contested primaries we just had will help to strengthen our party and democracy, and ultimately send our message to Nigerian voters in the impending elections.
6. To you all, I pay my absolute compliments and congratulate you on the success of your respective campaigns. I extend my gratitude to you all for accepting the outcome of this convention and agreeing to support my candidature as we move forward. I shall meet with you all in the coming days to fashion out how we shall confront the challenge ahead.
7. My dear fellow countrymen and women, it is with a deep sense of humility that I stand before you today to accept the nomination of my party, the All Progressives Congress to be its candidate and flag-bearer in 2015 presidential elections.
8. My nomination is not because I am better than any of the other contestants. I see it as a tribute and mark of confidence to carry the torch as we all join hands to rescue our dear country Nigeria, from those who have led us into the current state of insecurity, poverty, sectarian divide and hopelessness among our people.
9. I stand before you today to ask that you join me in a common cause. My call to you is not to realise the personal fulfilment of one man. This Common Cause is nothing less than the love for our nation and concern for its present condition. And a resolve to make things better for Nigeria.
10. What I say today is for all Nigerians: Christian and Muslim, Southern and Northern, rich and poor, young and old, man and woman. We are all citizens of Nigeria. There is no dividing line among us that I care to honour. Either we advance as one or fail altogether.
11. My choice and my colleagues choice and wish is that we progress together. Preserving the nation's future is a sacred obligation to all of us in this party. Leaders should be wholly committed to fulfilling this obligation otherwise they have no business being leaders.

12. Sadly, the current administration does not believe in this obligation. By their actions they are leading us to calamity.
13. At International Conferences, the Nigerian delegation is usually among the largest but at the same time the least effective. Our president should have the status and the voice of Africa's largest nation. But in political influence we are among the weakest.
14. Shall we at home continue to live in a condition where the Power Holding Company and its successors seem only to have the power to hold us in darkness?
15. Shall we continue in a situation where 250 of our daughters have been abducted and the government has been unable to rescue them or provide credible information about what steps they are taking?
16. Shall we live in a nation where several people were trampled to death in search of jobs in a stadium and yet no one has taken responsibility for the tragedy?
17. Shall we live in a nation where the ranks of the poor swell and their poverty increase while the consorts of the powerful enjoy unprecedented wealth? The lives of the poor are bled dry while those of the powerful soak in excessive abundance.
18. My answers to these questions are "No, No, No, No!"
19. It is time to close this demeaning chapter in our nation's history.
20. I ask that you join this effort, not for me, but to establish a better land for all of us.
21. I understand and accept the hard challenge ahead. When all is said and done, let it be written that Muhammadu Buhari gave his all for this nation.
22. As such, I make these five pledges regarding the government if we are elected next February;
 - a. We will govern Nigeria honestly, in accordance with the constitution.
 - b. We will strive to secure the country and efficiently manage the economy.
 - c. We will strive to attack poverty through broadly-shared economic growth and attacking corruption through impartial application of the law.
 - d. We will tolerate no religious, regional, ethnic or gender bias in our government.
 - e. We will return Nigeria to a position of international respect through patriotic foreign policy.
 - f. We will choose the best Nigerians for the right jobs.
23. Our government will be committed to the cause of the common man. Whether you are a Christian from Bayelsa State or a Muslim from Katsina State, you are first and foremost a Nigerian in my eyes. I shall treat you equally as my people, my national family, my brothers and sisters. There can be no genuine love of our country without loving all its people in our diversity.
24. Just as APC stands as a new party for a new Nigeria, our government will institute new policies to realise the new Nigeria.
25. We shall institute just policies that afford people the dignity of work and pay them a living wage for their sweat and toil. We intend to do this by instituting a national industrial policy, coupled with a national employment directive, that together shall revive and expand our manufacturing sector, creating jobs for our urban population and decreasing our reliance on expensive foreign imports.
26. We shall implement a national infrastructure master plan that will provide construction and related jobs across the land. Furthermore, by improving our transportation infrastructure through road, rail and port construction we expand the outer bounds of economic growth as no economy can grow beyond the capacity of its infrastructure.
27. Agriculture remains the backbone of the economy. Our government, when elected, will establish an agricultural policy that provides farmers a dignified living through improved inputs, improved extension services, access to credit and price support mechanisms.
28. On corruption, the government will enhance EFCC's powers to investigate independently. Moreover, we intend to plug the holes in NNPC accounting. There will no longer be two sets of books, one for public consumption and another for insiders who profit from this slick fraud. In an APC government, the public will know how much NNPC makes and where all the money goes.
29. No longer shall illegal flows of massive sums leave these shores to finance other economies. While our people languish in poverty, we effectively give financial aid to nations that is not justified. I am sick of this. It must stop. The money saved will finance jobs, health care and the provision of social safety net for the needy, weak and vulnerable of our land.
30. We will be a compassionate government, for out of compassion arises the truest forms of wealth and progress a society can attain. We shall open the door to tertiary education to excellent students who otherwise could not afford it. Pregnant and poor women and children shall be entitled to basic health care.
31. This is a Nigeria that I envisage but it is a far cry from the Nigeria that is now. Change is imperative if we are to avoid

the impending national failure. Poor leadership placed us in the ditch. Continuation of poor leadership will only dig a deeper trench for all of us to fall in.

32. Let us join hands in progressive union to pull each other and the nation from the abyss.

33. I pledge to do my utmost to make this happen but cannot do it alone. I need your support. I need your help to become President of Nigeria so that government may come to serve you, so that it may bring relief to the broken and weary among us and so that it may usher in a new Nigeria meant for us all, a Nigeria that is the birthright of everyone but the exclusive possession of no one.

God bless you.

God bless our fatherland – Nigeria

Thank you.
