
Rhetorical Devices in Political Campaign: A Study of Selected 2022/2023 Campaign Speeches of Atiku Abubakar

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Abstract

This study examines the use of rhetorical devices in the campaign speeches of Atiku Abubakar; a former presidential aspirant. Rhetorical devices are employed in political speeches as a technique for persuasion and manipulation of the electorates in order to obtain their support. This study therefore, aims to explore and identify the persuasive devices employed by Atiku Abubakar, and the underlying ideologies behind his usage of the devices. The study adopts Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse analysis as a tool for data analysis. Data for the study comprises of Atiku's speeches as contained in the dailies. The findings reveal that Atiku, in a bid to persuade the electorates, employed rhetorical devices like repetition, parallelism, metaphor, pronouns and personification. The study further discovers that the devices are employed in different context to drive a message home.

Keywords: political discourse, rhetoric devices, presidential campaign, critical discourse analysis

1) Introduction

Politics is one of the major events that pervade every human social world. It pertains to the process of struggling for power. According to Bayram (2010), it is a struggle for power in order to put certain political, economic and social ideas into practice.

A campaign speech is a speech delivered persuasively by a political aspirant in a political gathering especially during the period of election. The primary purpose of the speech is to win the loyalty and support of the electorates. It usually addresses key issues, outline policy proposals, and emphasize the candidate's qualification, with the major goal of convincing voters that the candidate is the best choice for the position they seek.

In political domain, language can be used to persuade, dissuade, manipulate the electorates into giving their mandates. Language is a potent vehicle for transmission of knowledge and information, it plays a powerful role in all aspects and spheres of human existence, and as the need for language is essential to all aspect of human life, so also is it a necessity in political arena.

Omozuwa and Ezejideaku (2007) assert that language used in politics has a certain characteristic which differentiate it from other varieties of language. They are of the opinion that politicians all over the world embellish their language in a unique way so as to give extra effect and force to their message in order to achieve their objectives.

This study examines rhetorical devices used by Atiku Abubakar in his campaign speeches. Atiku is a political figure in Nigeria who has contested for the seat of the presidency six times and has equally lost six times. This study adopts the Critical Discourse Analysis framework of Norman Fairclough as a theory which will also guide in data analysis.

2) Literature Review

The term 'rhetorics' is synonymous to persuasion whether spoken or written with the sole purpose of educating or persuading an audience.

Jones and Pecci (2004) assert that rhetorical devices contain metaphor, euphemism, the rule of three, parallelism and pronouns.

Hanim and Dewi (2018) states that metaphor is used for comparing two concepts in political discourse to make an abstract concept more concrete so that they can be easily understood and the audience will not be boring. Going further, Hanim et al also opines that euphemism is used to avoid the unpleasant or offensive word. Parallelism as a device is used to express several ideas by using similar structures. It is used to draw attention and emphasis are made with it to make the message conveyed memorable.

Summarily, rhetorical devices are employed in political language for the purpose of achieving effective communication. The term 'Discourse' on the other hand, has several definitions from different authors.

Henry and Tator (2002) capture the definition of discourse as the way in which language is used socially to convey broad historical meaning. It is language identified by the social conditions of its use, by who is using and under what conditions. Their definition of discourse is function based, that is, they defined discourse from the role it plays in the society. Dijk (1997) opines that discourse studies look at the form and function of language in conversation beyond its small grammatical pieces such as phonemes and morphemes.

Going by the various definitions of discourse by some authors stated above, discourse can be simply defined as a spoken or written form of language that is higher than a sentence and passes information to the receiver or reader. Some studies have been carried out by different scholars within the framework Critical Discourse Analysis.

Sharndama (2015), conducted a critical discourse analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech with the aim of

finding out the ideologies on which the new government is built. The study adopted Norman Fairclough's (1995) three-dimension analytical model for the analysis of data. The speeches were subjected to description, interpretation and explanation, and the result of the analysis showed that Buhari's inaugural speech is a revelation of plans and hopes in the new government. It also revealed the ideologies on which the new government headed by President Muhammadu Buhari intends to operate. The most important ones include: good governance, strengthening, international relation, foreign policies and democracy, fight insecurity, corruption and improve power supply and the nation's economy.

Awonuga (2005) in carrying out a stylistic study of sustenance of democracy by Nigeria's former president Olusegun Obasanjo examines the linguistic features that are manifested in the broadcast of Olusegun Obasanjo on August 2002 using CDA. He adopts the perspective of general stylistics in his analysis and his finding reveals that the speech contains pronoun, metaphoric expression, biblical reference and repetitions.

Oha (1994) in his work on a stylistics study of war speeches of Yakubu Gowon and Ojukwu examines the war speeches of the two army generals during the Biafra war using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA. He adopts the perspective of semiotics and systemic functional linguistics to highlight how language were used by the leaders to motivate their people for the execution of violence.

3) Theoretical Framework

This study employs Fairclough's (1995) three- dimensional model as a framework for data analysis. As a framework, it aims at

analysing the role language plays in the construction of knowledge, ideology and power. Fairclough's analytic framework includes three levels of analysis: the text, the discursive practice, and the socio-cultural practice. The analysis of the text consists of the study of the language structures produced in a discursive event, and the analysis of the discursive reproduction.

Fairclough's second dimension; discursive practice, involves the analysis of the process of production, interpretation, and consumption. This dimension is concerned with how people produce, interpret and transform texts.

The third dimension which is socio-cultural practice, is concerned with the relationship that exist among participants during discourse. Fairclough's approach to CDA focuses on the text, discursive practice and sociocultural practice, and the method of doing CDA as outlined by Fairclough are description, interpretation and explanation.

4) Research Methodology

The study is designed as a quantitative research, which is defined as a systematic investigation of phenomena by gathering quantitative data. It chooses one of the tools of quantitative research known as survey research.

Atiku Abubakar's campaign speeches delivered in Enugu (14 Feb,2023), Zamfara (Jan 30,2023) Edo (22 Oct,2023), Abuja (Dec 10,2022), Lagos (5 Dec,2022) and Gombe (2023) form the data. All the speeches were delivered by Atiku Abubakar while seeking for 2023 political mandate. They are downloaded from Arise Television and Channels Television respectively through YouTube.

The data presentation and analysis are simultaneously done using tables to achieve clarity and the objectives of the study as well. Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model is applied for data analysis in order to identify and explain the ideologies behind the usage of certain rhetorical devices.

5) Data Presentation and Analysis

5.1 Textual Analysis

This is the first stage in Fairclough's 3D model. It involves examining the linguistics features resident in a text to identify how meaning is constructed and conveyed. In this stage, the study focuses on identifying the rhetorical devices employed in Atiku Abubakar's campaign speeches and their intended meaning.

Table 1 Atiku Abubakar's Use of Pronoun *We*

Utterance	Rhetorical devices	Ideology
“ We are going to restructure this country. What do we mean by restructuring? we will give your states and local government more powers and resources”	Atiku uses the pronoun ‘we’ to show inclusiveness in his administration and unity.	The use of the first person pronoun ‘we’ in this expression shows that Atiku has great confidence in himself and counterparts to pilot the affairs of the country.

In table 1, the first-person plural pronoun *we* appears twice. Atiku uses the pronoun to depict inclusiveness, unity and

togetherness of purpose in the making of a great nation. He says “we are going to restore” instead of “I am going to restore” to show team work, and by this strategy, he tries to include or rather show that his administration would encourage team work for the betterment of the country.

Table 2 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Pronoun *We* (2)

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
<p>“We will put more police men on the street, we will equip and fortify them and since we have promised to devote more powers to state and local government, you can have your own local police. We shall make sure your local police do not harass you”</p>	<p>Atiku uses the pronoun ‘we’ to show togetherness with the audience as someone that has shared in their plight. He equally distances himself from the audience with the pronoun ‘we’.</p>	<p>The use of ‘we’ portrays leadership as a teamwork. Atiku believes with the help of his team, security of the country will be guaranteed.</p>

The first-person plural pronoun “we” appears four times in Table 2, while the second person pronoun “you” appears once together with the possessive form. Atiku uses the “we” pronoun to portray team work, it simply implies that he encourages togetherness and unity, and would work hand in hand with his officials if elected. He uses the second person pronoun “you” to distance himself from his electorates whom he says would benefit more.

Table 3 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Pronouns *My, I and We*

Utterance	Rhetoric device	Ideology
“ My brothers and sisters, my fellow people of Edo state, I have come here to make this undertaking and I promise you ; we will fulfil our promises”	Atiku uses the possessive pronoun ‘my’ to bring himself closer to the people. ‘I’ to portray self-opinion and ‘we’ to depict togetherness	The use of pronoun in this expression implies that Atiku sees himself as sharing the same hope and aspiration with the people of Edo state.

Table 3 shows that the possessive pronoun ‘my’ appears twice, the first-person singular pronoun “I” appears once, and the first-person pronoun ‘we’ appears once. The ideology behind the use of the mentioned pronouns by Atiku is clearly to bring himself closer to the people while expressing his self-opinion which is believed to become a reality through collective effort.

Table 4 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Pronoun *You*

Utterances	Rhetorical devices	Ideology
“Edo people, you are known to be a PDP state. Continue to stick to PDP, PDP will be loyal to you , PDP will pay you back. You have seen how APC have destroyed this country”	Atiku uses the pronoun “you” to distance himself from the people.	The use of pronoun in this except is to emphasize on party loyalty which the people have continued to display.

For Table 4, it is observed that the second person pronoun “you” appeared three times. The speaker’s motive is to emphasize his dependent on the people, and that it is only through mandate of the people that he can emerge victorious.

Table 5 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Repetition

Utterance	Rhetorical devices	Ideology
“ <u>I want you to</u> continue believing and <u>I want you to</u> continue supporting the PDP”	Atiku uses repetition to emphasis on his desires.	The motive behind the use of repetition here is to highlight on what is believed to be crucial.

Atiku Abubakar’s repetition of “I want you” “I want you” in Table 5 is a way of emphasising strongly his desire for the people seeing that they are faced with strong competitors vying for the same position and would not leave any stone unturned till their motive is achieved. With the help of repetition, he registers his desire in the mind of the people with emphasis.

Table 6 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Repetition (2)

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
“APC government have been telling you lies that they developed Lagos, they did not develop Lagos nah <u>lie, lie lie</u> . They are lying to you”	Atiku uses repetition as a device to register his disbelief in what may be perceived as truth.	The aim of using repetition is to convince the people to disregard what was said.

Table 6 presents Atiku's repetition of the words "lie", showing his strong opposition to what his opponent had said. With the use of repetition, he tries to dissuade the people from believing what he believes is false and has no element of truth.

Table 7 Atiku Abubakar's Use of Repetition (3)

UTTERANCE	Rhetorical device	Ideology
"It is time for you the people of Lagos to liberate yourselves from a <u>family government</u> to a <u>people's government</u> , from a <u>family government</u> to a <u>people's government</u> "	With the use of repetition, Atiku is able to emphasize on the type of government needed.	The motive behind this repetition is to strongly emphasize the need to displace what is tagged family government which won't profit the people.

Atiku repeated the phrase "family government" in Table 7 to emphasize and as well bring to the people's notice that they have left power for so long in the hands of same people with same ideology and bloodline. He repeated the phrase "people's government" to also let the people know that they can effect a change if they can work together with one mind towards the same goal.

Table 8 Atiku Abubakar's Use of Repetition (4)

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
"I want to let you know that this country is geared towards electing a	Syntactic repetition is employed by the speaker for the sake of emphasis.	The motive behind the repetition is to spell out strong

PDP government don't be an exception and don't be a minority"		what ought to be done.
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In Table 8, Atiku has repeated the phrase “don’t be” twice to emphasize on the need for the people to work towards the same goal and not exempt themselves. His repetition of “don’t be” is to drive straight or rather emphasize on what not to do.

Table 9 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Repetition (5)

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
“We will send back all our eligible children to <u>school</u> . they will go to <u>school</u> . Every child must go to <u>school</u> ”	Atiku uses the rhetoric device repetition for emphasis sake.	The motive of repetition here is to point out one of the basic things needed in the country.

Atiku’s continued repetition of the word “school” as seen in Table 9 is a way of emphasising on what is needed for the growth of the country. He uses that strategy to bring to the people’s knowledge one of his agenda, which would be accomplished if he is given the mandate and chance to rule. This suggests that Atiku recognises repetition as a device that will have more powerful and convincing effects on his audience.

Table 10 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Direct Comparison

Utterance	Rhetorical devices	Ideology
“.....Because PDP is Enugu and Enugu is PDP”	Atiku uses direct comparison thus, comparing Enugu to PDP.	The expression implies that Enugu is dominated by PDP members and thus, the people are expected to vote only PDP from top to bottom.

Atiku employs conceptual metaphor as a rhetorical device in Table 10 where he maps on the inherent qualities of a party onto the state. In this way, he conceptualises Enugu as a party. By the use of metaphor, Atiku simply wants his listeners especially the people of Enugu to know that because they have been so loyal and has continually showed support for the People’s Democratic Party, they can be regarded as PDP. This has a persuasive effect on the electorate to support the speaker who happens to be from the same party.

Table 11 Atiku Abubakar’s Application of Conceptual Metaphor

Utterance	Rhetorical devices	Ideology
“I said to the south-easterners, that <u>I am going to be the stepping stone</u> to an Igbo president and I mean it...”	Atiku employs the conceptual metaphor to paint a clear picture of how he intends to help the Igbos.	The speaker’s use of metaphor uses his competence and well a clearly picture of his intention.

From the expression of Atiku in Table 11, it can be clearly perceived that he understood the desire of the easterners with regards to producing a President and in a bid to persuade them into giving their mandate, he describes himself as a “stepping stone” that would usher in an Igbo President to Aso rock. Atiku’s use of the metaphor in this context shows he knows and understood the power of metaphor in campaign speech.

Table 12 Atiku Abubakar’s Application of Conceptual Metaphor (2)

Utterance	Rhetorical devices	Ideology
<p><u>Education is key to human development.</u> Today, we have the highest number of out of school children</p>	<p>Atiku employs the conceptual metaphor to arouse the people’s thoughtfulness.</p>	<p>The idea of employing the metaphor is to expose the ineffectiveness of the incumbent government in ensuring that education is made free.</p>

It is noticed in Table 12 that conceptual metaphor is employed by Atiku to reveal how much education is to the extent of mapping the inherent qualities of key on it. Atiku’s employment of metaphor as a tool is for the sake of highlighting the importance of education, one of the basic needs of Nigerians which because of so many reasons is denied the poor. He portrays education as a key for growths and goes further to assure the people he would ensure all and sundry have access to it.

Table 13 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Personification

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
<u>APC have destroyed this country, destroy the economy of this country, they have destroyed your educational opportunities, they have destroyed your job opportunity</u>	The speaker uses personification to describe the opponents negatively.	The expression implies that Apc as a party has rendered the country useless and thus, should not be given another chance.

Table 13 indicates that personification is used by Atiku to portray the opponent in a bad way. “APC has destroyed the country” The lifeless party (APC) is given the quality of being capable of destroying the economy and education as well as job opportunities. With the use of personification, APC the rival party is portrayed in bad light and given a bad name. This simply suggests that the people should not vote a party that have crippled the country in all ramifications, instead, they should vote for his own party.

Table 14 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Rhetorical Device

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
<u>‘...Therefore, we call on you to continue to be loyal to PDP and PDP will be loyal to you’</u>	Atiku uses the rhetorical device as a way of persuading the people.	The motive of using this device is a way of persuading his listeners.

In the expression in Table 14, the speaker employs personification in explaining how as a party, they would be loyal to

Enugu people if they remain loyal to them. This simply implies that if the people of Enugu massively vote for him and he wins, he would through the party reward them massively.

Table 15 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Parallelism

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
In the last 23 years, you are being governed by one family, <u>it is your right</u> and <u>it is your duty</u> to takeover that government and hand over to yourselves.	Atiku uses parallelism to prove to the people their ability to bring a change.	The expression shows that the speaker’s ideology is the ideal choice for candidate determined to bring a change.

Parallelism is a great way to make connection between ideas and claims. It is observed in Table 15 that Atiku employs parallelism in the identical syntactic construction “it is your right and it is your duty to takeover that government”. These words “right” and “duty” express the same general thought with a slight change added for rhetorical effect. It gives a controlled repetition of the phrase and its effect is to emphasize his key view and persuade the audience to sympathise with his views. Atiku uses “right” and “duty” to empathise the need to take over power.

Table 16 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Parallelism (2)

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
<u>I want you to continue believing</u> and <u>I want you to</u>	Parallelism is used here to make known what his party and	The speaker with the use of parallel structures, exposes

<u>continue supporting</u> the PDP.	himself expect from the people.	his innermost desire to his listeners.
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From Table 16 is observed that compound sentence is utilised to present two independent clauses. Here, the two independent clauses are parallel not only in terms of the structure but also in terms of the lexical items. Parallelism is achieved here through the use of the present continuous verb “believing and supporting”.

Table 17 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Parallelism (3)

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
If you elect me as your president, <u>I say and I promise by the grace of God.</u> I am going to set aside 10 billion US dollars for empowerment of young men and women.	Parallel clause is used here to emphasize the task the speaker and his party will undertake in developing the country.	Atiku is aware of how bad the economy of the country is and how badly the people desire for a change.

The expression by the PDP presidential flag bearer, Atiku Abubakar, presented in Table 17 is parallel not only in terms of structure but also in terms of the lexical items. Parallelism can be achieved through the use of the verbs “say” and “promise”.

Table 18 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Parallelism (4)

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
There was only one old tattered bridge, <u>no second mainland bridge, no third mainland bridge, no Tafawa belewa square,</u>	Parallelism is used here to create a memorable phrase in the mind of the people.	The speaker’s intention of repeating same grammatical structures is to prove a point.

Atiku employed parallelism in the speech in Table 18 to create a rhythm and catchy repetition that would be memorable in the minds of his listeners. His repetition of same grammatical pattern shows his intention to emphasize on what he believes strongly in, and parallelism is an idle device for emphasis.

Table 19 Atiku Abubakar’s Use of Parallelism (5)

Utterance	Rhetorical device	Ideology
It means that every part of this country will be given a sense of belonging, <u>no part will be side-lined, no part will be marginalised</u>	Parallelism is used here by the speaker to emphasize and create memorable phrases.	With parallelism, the speaker emphasizes his stand.

Table 19 shows the repetition of a part of the sentence. Atiku’s intention is to emphasize and create memorable phrases in the minds of the people. He employs the rhetoric device of parallelism to make known his stand to the people. His

administration would encourage unity and not division. Parallelism is achieved here with the words “side-line” and “marginalise”.

5.2 Discursive Practice

This second-dimension deals with text production, its consumption and distribution. The analysis of Atiku’s speech shows that Atiku produces the discourse, and the purpose behind the discourse is to persuade the electorates into giving their mandates to him. He uses the pronoun “we” to project the ideology of oneness and togetherness of purpose, and to portray unity and inclusiveness. He uses parallelism to make catchy and memorable statement. The ideology behind the usage of metaphor and personification is to clearly make abstract concepts vivid and concrete with the purpose of fostering understanding. With the use of pronouns like “we” and “my”, the audience consumed that the speaker is closer to them and shares in their pains and suffering and would certainly ameliorate things for them if given the chance to leadership.

5.3 Social Practice

This dimension examines ways in which discourse operates in various domains of society and it also reveals relationship of participants through discourse. As a politician vying for the seat of the federal republic of Nigeria, Atiku is bound to use language in a strategic way to appeal to the electorates in exchange for their mandates. The major purpose of a campaign speech is to persuade, manipulate and convince the audience at large into dancing to the speaker’s tune. Atiku, in trying to gain the loyalty, support and trust of his listeners employs pronouns, personification, metaphor, repetition and parallelism all geared towards the motive of influencing the minds of his electorates.

6) Summary and Conclusion

Campaign speeches are aspects of political discourse where languages used are ideologically laden. This study has examined campaign speeches as a subset of political discourse, using Critical discourse methodological approach, and the result of the findings show that Atiku used parallelism extensively in his speech to create rhythm and catchy repetition that would be memorable in the minds of his listeners. He also employs pronoun as a technique to indicate self-emphasis, inclusiveness, unity and solidarity. In Atiku's campaign speeches, personification and metaphor are used to make abstract concepts more concrete so they can be well understood.

Political language is filled with ideological thoughts and values, thus, what is said cannot be taken as its face value. The conscious and unconscious use of vocabulary and grammar in politics represent the ideological position of the speaker.

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