

# A Pragma-Discourse Study of the Campaign Manifesto of the 2023 Labour Party (Lp) Presidential Candidate

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>This study examines the 2023 election manifesto of the LP presidential candidate. The objectives of the investigation are to analyse the pragma-discourse features in the election manifesto used by the LP presidential candidate to present himself positively and others negatively, examine the speech acts in the election manifesto through which the LP candidate presented his political agenda, describe the ideologies that influenced the policies of the LP candidate and reveal the covert meanings in the election manifesto expressed by the LP candidate. The pragma-discourse features used in the manifesto of the LP presidential candidate are transitivity processes (material, mental and verbal), sentence types (simple and complex), cohesive relations (reference, additive and adversative conjunctions), deixis (temporal and spatial), inversion, and thematisation. The LP presidential candidate employs these features to present himself positively and other political opponents negatively. Peter Obi employed commissive and assertive speech acts. The commissive speech act conveys the LP candidate's plans in the election manifesto. The Assertive Speech Act states the policies and reforms of the LP candidate as well as his political opponents' limitations. The study shows that the LP candidate employed covert and subtle means to brandish his political opponents' limitations and inefficiency.</i>
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Copyright © 2025 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.	
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## Introduction

The term 'pragma-discourse' is peculiar to linguists whose area of inquiry surrounds pragmatics and discourse analysis. Pragma-discourse studies the speaker's meaning, focusing not on an utterance's phonetic or grammatical form but on the speaker's intentions and beliefs. The study of the meaning and the influence that a given context can have on the message have remained the centrality of discourse in the study of Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis. It requires knowledge of the speaker's identity and the place and time of the utterance. Cutting (2002) believes pragmatics and discourse analysis have much in common in investigating context, text, and function. Hence, Pragma-Discourse becomes a term used to account for utterance and meaning in a given context. It has become a field of linguistics that concentrates on the significance of words in communication and how interlocutors convey

more than the words they utilise. Additionally, Pragma-Discourse studies discourse and text, focusing on how pieces of language become significant and integrated for their users. To draw the borderlines between the two fields, Puig (2003) believes that, in contrast, discourse analysts focus on elucidating the implied components within the language without considering anything external; pragmatics utilises diverse domains of human affairs to interpret utterances appropriately. Therefore, the fusion of the Pragma-Discourse study as a term is a linguistic attempt to jointly account for language in action and the context for which language is used to derive meaningful interpretation. Pragma discourse is also a term used in linguistics and discourse analysis to refer to the overt conversation or consideration of language, communication, and discourse within a discussion or text. It involves the metalinguistic consciousness and reflection on how language is used, how

communication unfolds, and how discourse is structured. Pragma-discourse can also include discussions about the purpose of communication, the choice of words, the intended audience, the tone or style of communication, the social or cultural context influencing the discourse, and other aspects related to language use and communication strategies. Understanding pragma-discourse can help analyse and interpret texts, conversations, and interactions by considering the language's literal content and the implicit meanings, intentions, and strategies behind the communication.

The analysis of discourse is primarily the analysis of language in use. Linguists concentrate on the formal properties of language, while discourse analysts examine the function of language, which could be written or spoken (Olateju, 2018). Spoken and written forms of language are different in their manner of production and at the point of production. Invariably, Discourse Analysis can be viewed from many perspectives, especially as it is seen as a clear and organised account of structures, approaches, or processes of text (written) or talk (spoken). Discourse analysis is also the language used to analyse social, political, and cultural formations.

Discourse is usually seen as the actual instance of communicative action in the medium of language, although some define the term more broadly as meaningful symbolic behaviour in any mode (Johnstone et al., 2014). Communication can, of course, involve other media besides language. Media such as photography, clothing, music, architecture, and even dance can be meaningful (Johnstone, 2014). Therefore, discourse analysts must often consider the interconnectedness between language and other modes. This is evident because discourse analysis focuses on the analytical process relatively explicitly.

Pragmatics and discourse analysis are two fields of study that are sometimes regarded as interdisciplinary because both share an interest in those aspects of language that are context-dependent. Barron and Schneider (2014, p. 1) suggest that the study of discourse is not perceived as falling outside the realm of pragmatics; rather, it can be seen as an integral part of it. Hence, the pragmatics of discourse and the pragmatics of utterance represent two complementary levels of analysis, correspondingly emphasising more global and local aspects of human interaction. Whereas the latter concentrates on investigating speech acts as the fundamental units of analysis, the former investigates how speech acts can combine into larger units. The two-level analysis referred to above has been termed micro-pragmatics and macro-pragmatics. It is assumed that several approaches to Discourse Analysis are pragmatic

because they are more concerned with interactional issues than Syntax.

Language functions as a means of grafting or granting power and defining the connection between its users based on the roles it assigns to them. The demonstration of power is achieved via the utilisation of language, with every language user engaging in strategically manipulating linguistic elements to further their hidden objectives. It is important to note that the unspoken implications of language sometimes have more significant influence than the explicit statements spoken. Language aids the establishment of connections to people's emotions and feelings. Akinkurolere (2011) contends that the level of support politicians receive from voters is based on their message and how it is delivered since these factors ultimately decide the success of their candidature, programmes, or policies. Therefore, the political message and its mode of presentation are highly significant.

The role of a president is the highest democratic position in any country; hence, it is necessary to have regular communication with the general public. This has been made feasible by delivering manifestoes and creating manifestoes. Although, manifestoes are not the only means through which the President can communicate to the masses. The main objective of political discourse is to sway, enlighten, instruct, shape, inspire, or convince large groups of people (Ayeomoni & Akinkuolere, 2012). Throughout history, elected officials have achieved success by employing sophisticated and persuasive speech to convince the public of the validity of their ideas, using skilled and witty language to make their arguments and persuasions more compelling.

Therefore, it is crucial that a President, elected by the constitution, prioritises the people. This is because a democratic, egalitarian system establishes a government representing and serving most of the population. Political papers such as manifestoes and political speeches serve as the primary means of fostering, formulating, and strengthening community affiliations, conveying ideas, and advocating for policies, actions, viewpoints, and programmatic agendas inside a nation (Ehineni, 2014; Sharndana, 2015; Ibrahim, 2020; Ikeke, 2021; Ashraf et al., 2022).

Manifestoes are widely embraced in many countries worldwide because politics is vital in human affairs. Campaign manifestoes are essential to the public as they serve as a primary platform for political leaders to communicate their goals, perspectives, emotions, and actions on national matters. These manifestoes have a

significant impact on the public's opinions and decisions. According to Younane (2007), inaugural manifestoes are used not only for the content of the candidate's message but also for the manner and location in which it is delivered. Within such texts, the President and the political party aim not only to secure public votes but also to instil a sense of confidence among the people regarding the potential of the administration that may be established. Hence, using language in this context may be characterised as a manifestation of ideas and a means of persuasion, a weapon for upholding authority, and a means of acquiring authority.

## Statement of the Problem

Manifestoes are the language of politics used for power acquisition purposes. It seems to be a mystery how the communicative ideologies conveyed through manifestoes can dramatically and strategically cause changes in the choice of electing presidents. Some studies on political manifestoes have placed much significance on examining presidential campaign manifestoes over time to reveal how presidential rhetoric shapes power and ideology (Younane, 2007; Akinkulere, 2011; Akinkulere et al., 2013; Ehineni, 2014; Sharndana, 2015; Idegbekwe & Nwala, 2016; Ibrahim, 2020; Ikeke, 2021; Ashraf et al., 2022). Instead, these studies have focused on analysing individual manifestoes during a specific period.

The problem of x-raying these manifestoes from a pragma-discourse point of view has created a compelling need to study election manifestoes through an acceptable theoretical framework to contribute meaningfully to the already existing body of knowledge. Aspirants manifestoes enable them to provide insights into their political agenda. Hence, there is a need to aid the public in having a more profound meaning beyond the surface meaning in aspirants manifestoes. This is the problem that this study intends to solve. Manifestoes are predominantly words expressed via a condensed expression to motivate, inspire, instigate, or even condemn. This study is geared towards unraveling the significance of manifestoes as they affect and influence the public during and after elections. Examining the broader socio-historical context provides a valuable understanding of how Presidential candidates have effectively reused and marketed their speeches, both through subtle and overt means, throughout history. Additionally, it aids in delineating the evolution of Presidential rhetoric using diachronic analysis, aiming to enhance the conventional synchronic findings found in studies by Adetunji (2009), Ayeomoni & Akinkulere (2012), Ayeomini (2012), and others. It is crucial to examine how this history precisely demonstrates the varying approaches Presidential

candidates have in conceptualising ideas and their intended methods of governing Nigeria.

## Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study focuses on the pragma-discourse prism of campaign manifesto of the 2023 Labour party presidential election candidate. The following are the specific objectives:

- a. analyse the pragma-discourse features in the election manifesto used by the Labour party candidate to present SELF positively and OTHERS negatively;
- b. explore the speech acts in the election manifesto through which the Labour party candidate presented his political agenda;
- c. examine the ideologies that influenced the policies expressed in the election manifesto of the Labour party candidate and
- d. analyse the meanings covertly expressed in the election manifesto of the Labour party presidential candidates.

## Research Questions

The research questions set out for this study include:

- a. What are the pragma-discourse features used in the election manifesto by the Labour party candidate to present SELF positively and OTHERS negatively?
- b. What speech acts in the election manifesto were used by the Labour party candidate to present his political agenda?
- c. What ideologies influenced the policies expressed in the election manifesto of the Labour party candidate?
- d. What meanings are covertly expressed in the election manifesto of the Labour party presidential candidate?

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

The study uses the qualitative method of analysis. It adopts a descriptive research design in examining the presidential election manifestos of the 2023 general election in Nigeria. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.17) defined the qualitative research design "as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at using statistical procedures or other means of quantification". A qualitative research design is concerned with understanding the context in which behaviour occurs. The strength of a qualitative research technique is that it allows a broader view to be taken and, therefore, makes the research approach flexible. This design is justified because the study included studying the

ideological underpinnings of Presidential election manifestos, for which the absolute result was not the target. This research again employed the qualitative approach because the qualitative approach does not only investigate what a problem is but also why, how, where and when the problem appeared. The method does not produce information in the particular case studies but also draws general conclusions on the informed assertion. It can also be used to seek empirical support for such research hypotheses (Lincoln, 2005).

### **Population and Sampling Technique**

The data for this study is the 2023 presidential election manifesto of the Labour Party (LP). The manifesto was downloaded from the website of the political party. The LP election manifesto contains 72 pages. Forty (40) excerpts from the manifesto are sampled purposively for this investigation. The election manifesto belongs to the non-spontaneous category of oral speeches. In other words, it was formally prepared and written for oral delivery. The pragma-discourse features, speech acts, ideologies and covert messages of Mr. Peter Obi.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

The study employs a purposive sampling method to select 40 excerpts from the election manifesto of the Labour Party candidate. The purposive sampling method is chosen because it enables the study to choose only those portions of texts that are relevant to the variables under scrutiny.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

The study employs van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to the Critical Discourse Model (CDA), supported by Searle's speech act and Grice's conversational implicature in examining the study's data for the pragma-discourse features and speech acts deployed about the political agenda and ideologies of the LP presidential candidate as well as the covert meanings expressed in the election manifesto. The study draws insight from van Dijk's macro, micro and meso levels. The micro level focuses on language use, that is, the immediate lexical items, grammatical choices and rhetorical interrelations held within any text. Conversely, the macro is the higher level representing the text's topic, theme or gist (van Dijk, 2001). The level addresses concepts like dominance, power, and inequality within social groups (van Dijk, 2001). The macro has a relationship between language and all the meta-language features of communicative behaviour. Finally, the meso level acts as a bridge between the micro and macro levels and focuses mainly on the context of the text and how it is initially produced (van Dijk, 2001). This study combines the three levels simultaneously to analyse the

data. The micro, macro, and meso levels are supported by van Dijk's notion of the ideological square, which discusses how political actors employ linguistic features in their texts to present themselves positively and negatively to others. While Grice's conversational implicature is deployed to reveal the hidden meanings in the utterances of the APC presidential candidate, Seale's speech act serves to identify the unique characteristics of the election manifesto and how the LP presidential candidate uses language in a social context. The data analysis is divided into four sections. The first section examines the excerpts using van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to the CDA model. Insights from van Dijk's macro, micro and meso levels and his notion of the ideological square are deployed here in identifying and describing the pragma-discourse features used in the election manifesto by the LP candidate to present himself positively and others negatively. This stage is followed by the second stage of the analysis, which examines the selected excerpts and how speech acts have been used to relay the political agenda of the LP presidential candidate. The third stage of the analysis focuses on the ideological underpinnings of the LP candidate, as evidenced in his manifesto. Finally, the fourth stage employs Grice's conversational maxims to uncover the covert meanings expressed in the election manifesto of the LP candidate.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This section examines the selected excerpts to answer the research questions. The data analysis and interpretation are structured in four sections, as discussed below.

### **Presentation of Self Positively and Others Negatively in the Election Manifestos**

Van Dijk (2005) posits that "a socio-cognitive approach to discourse offers a unique and necessary interface between the macro aspects of society and the micro aspects of discourse and interpretation" (p. 53). The meeting point between the macro and micro is regarded as the 'meso', which informs the notion of context. In line with van Dijk's submission, Abaya (2019) states that the macro level of analysis comprises issues such as positive self-presentation and negative other-representation. According to Reniro (2011), the micro level of analysis covers aspects such as coherence, cohesive relations, lexical and topic selection, rhetorical figures, deictic expressions, speech acts, and proposition structures. Other elements of the micro level of analysis include lexical items, grammatical choices, and rhetorical interrelations in any text. This section employs insights from van Dijk's micro, macro and meso levels in analysing the pragma-discourse features used in the election manifesto of Mr. Peter Obi. The essence of the analysis is to describe how the LP candidate used different pragma-discourse features to present himself positively and



others negatively.

This analysis captures how Peter Obi has deployed pragma-discourse features in presenting himself positively and others negatively.

**Excerpt 21.**

Our vision is a secure, united and prosperous Nigeria that works for everyone and that realises the hope of black people of the world as a city of on the hill. We will run a government of national unity, bringing together for the table at hand (POEM, 2023, p. 6).

**Excerpt 22.**

The new Nigeria that we will build is a society where political power will no longer be used to serve the interest of the ruling class and subject the people to chronic poverty and deprivation (POEM, 2023, p. 10).

**Excerpt 23.**

We will build a society where citizens are motivated to work hard, to innovate, to invent fully assured that they will enjoy the fruits of their enterprise (POEM, 2023, p. 9).

**Excerpt 24.**

We are on a mission to stop the deterioration and redirect our beloved society to our beloved country to prosperous and sustain development (POEM, 2023, p. 7).

**Excerpt 25.**

We want to end the race to extreme poverty and state collapse under mercenaries who have posed as messiahs (POEM, 2023, p.8).

**Excerpt 26.**

Nigeria has been captured by an elite that has shown no commitment to development (POEM, 2023, p.13).

**Excerpt 27.**

Since 2015, the crisis of leadership has worsened to the point that the Nigerian state is now generally described as a failed or failing state (POEM, 2023, p.15).

**Excerpt 28**

In 2015 alone, 5.1m Nigerians entered into acute poverty, bringing the number of Extremely poor Nigerians to about 92m (POEM, 2023, p. 9).

**Excerpt 29**

The perennial failure of economic and social policies to grow Nigeria's economy and transform the live of its people is not an accident (POEM, 2023, p. 18).

**Excerpt 30**

It is the expected result of a faulty political economy that has concentrated political power in the hands of politicians who came to power

through their contrivances and not through the affirmation of the people, and therefore, do not have the incentive to serve the people's interest (POEM, 2023, p. 18).

To emphasise the positive aspects of his government, if voted into office, Peter Obi, in excerpt twenty-one, uses the pronominal reference (e.g. our), the complex sentence and material verbs (e.g. works, realises, run and bringing) to show solidarity with the members of his political party who are represented in the discourse with the pronominal reference "our". Material verbs such as "run", "works", "realises", and "bringing" serve to depict what Obi's government has planned to execute in Nigeria if allowed to serve. Obi presents himself positively before the Nigerian masses by emphasising what his government has planned to do in Nigeria.

In excerpt twenty-two, Obi uses pronominal references, nominal phrases, and material verbs to present himself positively and negatively. The pronominal "we" in the text refers to Obi's government. There are three material verbs in the excerpt. They are "build", "used", and "subject". The first material verb is attributed to Obi's government, and it functions to describe what the Obi government has planned to do in Nigeria. The remaining two material verbs are attributed to the out-group members or the other, who can be referred to as the current government. This out-group member is captured in the text using the nominal phrase "the ruling class". Obi uses the first material verb, "build", to present himself positively to his listeners. Conversely, he employs the other two material verbs (e.g. used and subject) to represent the ruling class negatively. In excerpt twenty-three, Obi presents himself positively by commenting on the type of Nigerian society his administration planned to build should they be voted into office. The pronominal reference (e.g. we) refers to Obi's government, while the second pronominal reference (e.g. them) denotes all Nigerians. The material verb (e.g. build) is attributed to Obi's government and describes what his government plans to do in Nigeria. The other material verb is attributed to Nigerians his government has planned to serve. Excerpt twenty-four captures the positive presentation of self and the negative representation of others. The nominal expression (e.g. we are on a mission to stop the deterioration and redirect our beloved country to prosperity...) serves two functions. First, it presents the Obi government positively due to its mission to emancipate Nigerians from the shackles of underdevelopment. Second, it represents the APC's administration negatively due to its inability to make Nigeria advance in growth and development. The pronominal item (e.g. we) denotes Obi's government, while the material verbs (e.g. stops and

redirect) indicate what the Obi government has planned to execute in Nigeria. In excerpt twenty-five, Obi speaks of the pitiable and sordid condition in which poverty has plunged many Nigerians. Nominal expressions (e.g. extreme poverty, state collapse, and mercenaries) have negative connotations. The nominal expressions portray the APC government and the ruling elites poorly. The negative representation of others in excerpt twenty-six is captured in the expression (e.g. an elite that has shown no commitment to development). The noun (e.g. elite) denotes those at the helm of power who enrich themselves with the nation's abundant resources and allow the citizens to wallow in abject penury. In excerpt twenty-seven, the nominal expression (e.g. "the crisis of leadership has worsened" and a failed or failing state") is deployed to negatively represent the current government for its inability to govern the country effectively. Excerpts twenty-eight to thirty equally represent the APC government in a bad light. For instance, the expressions (e.g. the failure of policy formulation and administration by the government) in excerpt twenty-eight, (e.g. the perennial failure of economic and social powers) in excerpt twenty-nine and (e.g. the result of a faulty political economy and politicians who have come to power through their contrivances) in excerpt thirty are nominal expressions used in Obi's manifesto to represent the APC government and his political rivals negatively.

### Speech Acts in the Election Manifestos

The second phase of the data analysis focuses on the LP candidate's utilisation of speech acts to relay his political agenda. Speech acts involve the analysis of intended meaning in conversation and discourse analysis that investigates the election manifesto and choice of words by the LP presidential aspirant during the electoral campaign. Searle (1979) proposed five speech act classifications to analyse political discourse from a speaker's perspective. The five speech acts proposed by Searle are assertive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, and directives are applied to the election manifesto to describe how they have been used to relay the political agenda of the LP presidential candidate. The analysis presents the speech acts used in Peter Obi's election manifesto to present his political agenda. The following excerpts are examined in order to identify and describe the choice of speech acts deployed in his manifesto.

#### Excerpt 51

I, Peter Gregory Onwubuasi Obi and my running mate, Yusuf DattiBaba-Ahmed, promise you that we will be the leaders you can trust to be honest, diligent and ever-present to work for you (POEM, 2023, p.6).

#### Excerpt 52

We are on a mission to stop the deterioration and redirect our beloved country to prosperity and sustainable development (POEM, 2023, p.8).

#### Excerpt 53

A sizeable portion of the Nigerian state is now generally described as a failed or failing state (POEM, 2023, p. 9).

#### Excerpt 54

About 63% of Nigerians (133m) are so poor that they do not have access to basic sanitation, good nutrition, basic education, and health care or employment (POEM, 2023, p.10).

#### Excerpt 55

Nigeria failed to realize its potential because her leaders are mostly incompetent (POEM, 2023, p. 12).

#### Excerpt 56

Domestically, we recognized that several years of self-serving and incompetent leadership has divided the nation and played on religious and ethnic sentiments against nationalism and patriotism (POEM, 2023, p.11).

#### Excerpt 57

To secure Nigeria, we will deal decisively with insecurity by putting a permanent end to the incessant banditry, insurgency, kidnapping and cross-border terrorism in our country today (POEM, 2023, p. 13).

#### Excerpt 58

Ensure that our administration's pronouncements, policies and conduct reflect its strong commitment to fostering a united Nigeria (POEM, 2023, p. 30).

#### Excerpt 59

The problem is leadership: a leadership that is not attuned to the people, does not believe in the people, and will never serve the people's interest (POEM, 2023, p. 14).

#### Excerpt 60

We will drive the expansion of Nigerian content initiative with emphasis on the promotion of made-in-Nigeria goods and services as a pillar of our administration (POEM, 2023, p. 37).

In the texts above, we find several instances where Obi deploys the speech to relay his political agenda to the Nigerian masses. Two types of illocutionary acts evidenced in Obi's manifesto are the commissive and assertive speech acts. The commissive speech act features in excerpts fifty-one, fifty-seven, fifty-eight and fifty-nine, while the assertive speech act occurs in excerpts fifty-two, fifty-three, fifty-four, fifty-five, fifty-six and fifty-nine. As regards the commissive speech act, Obi speaks of the challenges faced

by the different sectors in Nigeria and highlights the steps his government must take to address these challenges. The commissive speech act is indicated in excerpt fifty-one using the word 'promise'. In this text, Obi promises Nigerians that he and his running mate will be the excellent and visionary leaders Nigerians want them to be. The effect of this statement on the masses is that it assures them that when both candidates are elected, they will serve the interests of Nigerians. The second instance of the commissive speech act is seen in excerpt fifty-seven, in which Obi discusses the issue that Nigerians have been witnessing with insecurity. As a result of the challenge of insecurity, Obi promises Nigerians that his government will address the nagging and long-standing issue once and for all. The commissive speech act in this utterance is indicated with the expressions 'we will deal decisively with insecurity' and 'putting a permanent end to the incessant banditry'. By informing Nigerians of what his government plans to do as far as the nation's insecurity challenge is concerned, Obi creates confidence and assurance in Nigerians. The commissive speech act is conspicuous in excerpt fifty-eight, where Obi comments on some of his government's policies. The lexical expression 'ensure that our administration's pronouncements, policies and conducts reflect its strong commitment' is a promise made by the Obi's government to Nigerians.

Similarly, excerpt sixty's expression 'we will drive' indicates Obi's deployment of the commissive speech act. In this text, Obi promises to revamp the Nigerian content initiative by emphasizing and promoting made-in-Nigeria goods and services. The commissive speech act deployed in Obi's utterance aids in creating hope, assurance, and encouragement in Nigerians.

However, as earlier mentioned, the second illocutionary act deployed in Obi's manifesto is the assertive speech act. This speech seems to dominate his utterance because of his inner cravings to enlighten Nigerians about their problems and show them his government's plan to address these challenges. The first instance of the assertive speech act is seen in excerpt fifty-two, where Obi informs Nigerians about the deteriorating state of the country and the plan of his government to bring Nigeria out from its deterioration. The pronoun 'we' denotes Nigerians. Obi uses this pronominal reference to show solidarity with Nigerians. Apart from performing the function of solidarity, it serves for inclusivity; that is, it makes Obi a part of the Nigerians who have been plunged into a state of deterioration by the government's policies. The assertive acts are evident in excerpt fifty-three, where Obi declares Nigeria as a failed state, and in excerpt fifty-four, where he refers to the percentage of Nigerians stricken with poverty. In both instances, the effect of this information on the masses is

sadness and despondency.

In excerpt fifty-five, Obi speaks of Nigeria's potential and how it failed to fulfil it. Conversely, in excerpt fifty-six, he hammers at the incompetence of Nigerian leaders and how they have destroyed the nation through religions and ethnic sentiments. In both excerpts, the assertive act serves to orient Nigerians about the challenges the nation has been facing. The effect of these messages on the masses is anger and displeasure towards Nigerian leaders. The final use of assertive speech is seen in excerpt fifty-nine, in which Obi exposes the inadequacies of the Nigerian leaders. This inadequacy is relayed through the assertive speech act. While the act creates anger and sadness in the masses, it equally rebukes Nigerian leaders for their insensitivity to the masses plight.

### **Ideologies Expressed in the Election Manifestos**

In the complex interplay between cognition, society, and discourse, van Dijk (1998) defines ideologies as a form of social cognition and as the basis of the social representation of a group. In a later work, he defines ideologies as "'a system of ideas and socio-cognately shared representations of social groups'" (van Dijk, 2013, p. 15). The reproduction of ideology through language is a common feature in political encounters, where politicians bring diverse dispositions in their choice and use of language closely tied to their social positioning. These dispositions determine the perspective or the ideology they share, which differs from individual to individual. With their rich diversity, such ideological positions are expressed in the discourse strategies employed by politicians, through which they seek to influence listeners' opinions through their speeches or addresses. (Taiwo, 2007). Given the rich tapestry of ideologies in political discourse, this analysis section delves into the ideologies expressed by the LP candidate in the election manifesto.

The following excerpts are examined to identify and describe these ideologies.

#### **Excerpt 81**

To secure Nigeria, end banditry and insurgency, and unite our dear nation, to manage our diversity such that no one is left behind (POEM, 2023, p. 2).

#### **Excerpt 82**

Restructure the polity through effective legal and institutional reforms to entrench the rule of law, aggressively fight corruption, reduce the cost of governance, and establish an honest and efficient civil service (POEM, 2023, p. 2).

#### **Excerpt 83**

Embark on comprehensive legal and industry reforms and practicable restructuring measures to ensure the entrenchment of the rule of law, and decisively fight all forms of corruption (POEM, 2023, p. 4).

#### **Excerpt 84**

Ensure that in policy and practice, governance will be made more inclusive, cost-effective, transformative, and less transaction (POEM, 2023, p.4).

#### **Excerpt 85**

Ensure that Nigeria is progressively better governed through legislative, executive, and judiciary reforms, so that the constitutional separation of powers among the three arms of government are entrenched and the three tiers of government allowed to function (POEM, 2023, p. 5).

#### **Excerpt 86**

Ensure transparency and strict adherence to the dictates of our constitution in all matters of governance and the allocation of resources and projects (POEM, 2023, p.15).

#### **Excerpt 87**

We will pay special attention to the Ecowas region in order to secure our borders and ensure the integrity of regional security (POEM, 2023, p.55).

#### **Excerpt 88**

Make deliberate efforts to recreate a sense of patriotism, shared ownership, and responsibilities in matters of nation-building, integration and cohesion (POEM, 2023, p.55).

#### **Excerpt 89**

Pursue holistic poverty eradication with emphasis on agricultural revolution Through effective utilisation of our vast arable lands (POEM, 2023, p.25).

#### **Excerpt 90**

Enhance the human capital of Nigerian youths for productivity and global competitiveness through investment in world-class scholarship and research, quality healthcare, and entrepreneurship (POEM, 2023, p.30).

The excerpts above illustrate some of the ideologies that influenced the policies made in Peter Obi's manifesto. Excerpt eighty-one focuses on the issue of insecurity in Nigeria and how the Obi's government has planned to solve the issue of banditry and insurgency and unite Nigerians. Obi's willingness to fix Nigeria's insecurity and polarization challenges must have been influenced by his positive attitudes towards his ideology of natural security and unity in diversity. To this end, he believes that a very effective

government must protect the citizens' lives and properties and unite them. The expressions (entrench the rule of law and aggressively fight corruption) in excerpt eighty-two and (entrenchment of the rule of law and decisively fight all forms of corruption) in excerpt eighty-three exemplify the resolve of the Obi government to restructure the polity through effective legal and institutional reforms to entrench the rule of law and combat all forms of corruptive practices. The decision of Obi's government to uphold the rule of law and combat corruption in all its forms must have been influenced by his ideology of the supremacy of the rule of law and transparency and accountability in government.

In excerpt eighty-four, Obi speaks of the need to reduce the cost of governance and make it inclusive. This is in line with the principles of a democratic government where the citizens are accorded the privilege to participate in governance. Obi's decision to operate an inclusive government must have been influenced by his positive attitude towards the ideology of inclusivity in governance. Other dominant ideologies in Peter Obi's election manifesto are his positive attitudes towards the independence of the judiciary and decentralization of powers in excerpt eighty-five, the supremacy of the constitution in excerpt eighty-six, foreign policy in excerpt eighty-seven, and nationalism in the remaining excerpts. In excerpt eighty-five, Obi's policy of separating powers among the three arms of government must have been influenced by his ideology of democracy, where powers are split among the three arms of the government.

### **Meanings Covertly Expressed in the Election Manifestos**

The fourth objective of the study is to identify and discuss the conversational implications of the election manifesto of the LP presidential candidate in the 2023 general elections. This analysis examines Peter Obi's election manifesto to uncover the hidden meanings it expresses.

#### **Excerpt 111**

We will deal decisively with insecurity by putting a permanent end to the incessant banditry, insurgency, kidnapping and cross-border terrorism in our country (POEM, 2023, p. 3).

#### **Excerpt 112**

Securing and uniting Nigeria and growing her economy requires steady and trusted hands (POEM, 2023, p.6).

#### **Excerpt 113**

The problem is leadership. A leadership that is not attuned to the people, does not believe in the people and will never serve the people's interest (POEM, 2023, p.11).



**Excerpt 114**

We will implement radical economic policies that will drastically reduce our debt-servicing ratio and debt to revenue ratio (POEM, 2023, p.23).

**Excerpt 115**

Our determination to reduce cost of governance in Nigeria will start with the immediate implementation of the Oronsaye report which recommended the consideration of agencies of government (POEM, 2023, 28).

**Excerpt 116**

Strengthen the supreme court of the federation by increasing the number of judges and equipping them with the capacity to clear the backlog of cases and enhance the speedy adjudication of cases (POEM, 2023, p. 26).

**Excerpt 117**

The situation will allow for good governance through the pipeline of accountability (POEM, 2023, p. 31).

**Excerpt 118**

We will address current joblessness in extent national policies and frameworks with the view to involve resources for investment in critical, physical and social infrastructure (POEM, 2023, p. 38).

**Excerpt 119**

We will provide health insurance to cover 133 million poorest Nigerians including pregnant women, children, aged and the disabled (POEM, p. 47).

**Excerpt 120**

Reform and restructure the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI) to deliver adequate, accessible, reliable and affordable power for Nigerians (POEM, 2023, p.33).

In the texts above, we observe the speaker's utilisation of conversational implicature. A study of these utterances shows that they contain some hidden meanings. In excerpt one hundred and eleven, Peter Obi speaks of the different challenges of insecurity in the country and the plans of his government to combat these challenges. The excerpt comprises a complex sentence comprising one primary and two subordinate clauses. Obi employs the act of informing to relate the issue of insecurity in Nigeria. The following expressions from the excerpt (e.g. dealing decisively with insecurity and putting a permanent end to the incessant banditry) capture how his government plans to tackle the challenges of insecurity. From these utterances, it can be implied that there is a challenge of insecurity in Nigeria which has persisted and has not been tackled decisively. Observe that the challenges he refers to are expressed using

lexical items such (e.g. banditry, insurgency, kidnapping and cross-border terrorism). While the adjective (e.g. incessant) shows the persistence of the challenge, the verbs (e.g. deal and putting) indicate how his government plans to address this challenge.

A study of excerpts one hundred and twelve and thirteen reveals the following implicatures, which can be derived from the speaker's ambiguous language. The first implication is that Nigerians are not secure, Nigeria is not united, and the hands growing Nigeria's economy are not steady and trusted. However, from the utterance in excerpt one hundred and thirteen, we imply that Nigeria does not have a radical economic policy; Nigeria's debt servicing ratio is high, and Nigeria's debt to revenue ratio is high. Excerpt one hundred and fourteen focuses on the nation's state of economy. Obi's statement in this excerpt implies that Nigeria's economy is consumption-centered instead of production-centered. Also, the nation's economy is not driven by an agrarian revolution and export-oriented industrialisation.

Excerpt one hundred and fifteen comments on Nigeria's high cost of governance and what Obi's administration plans to do if voted into office. The implication of this utterance arises from the speaker's use of ambiguous language, which makes one infer that Nigeria's governance cost is very high. Oronsaye's report, prepared to address the high cost of governance, has not been implemented, and agencies have not been consolidated. The focus of excerpt one hundred and sixteen is on the Supreme Court in Nigeria and how it can be reformed so that it works effectively. His utterance implies that Nigeria's supreme court needs to be consolidated, the number of judges is low, and there are a lot of unclear cases. Excerpt one hundred and seventeen refers to some of Obi's reforms and how they can help the various sectors in Nigeria. This utterance's implication is derived from the flouting of the maxim of manner. From the utterance, we imply that Nigeria lacks excellent and accountable governance. Excerpt one hundred and eighteen refers to the dilapidated infrastructure in Nigeria and how Obi's government intends to address this issue. Here, Obi's utterance in this excerpt implies that the infrastructural development in Nigeria is poor due to the bottlenecks in extant policies. Excerpt one hundred and nineteen refers to the health sector in Nigeria. The implication of this utterance arises from the speaker's use of ambiguous language. The utterance implies that Nigerians have no health insurance.

The excerpt one hundred and twenty focuses on Nigeria's electricity sector. Obi speaks of the power sector in Nigeria and how his government plans to revolutionise it. The implication of this utterance is derived through the flouting

of the maxim of manner. From the excerpt, one can imply that the electricity supply to Nigerians is not adequate, inaccessible, reliable, and affordable. From the analysis of the LP candidate's election manifesto, it is assumed that conversational implicature is a viable pragma-discourse feature deployed to express hidden messages in the manifesto. Through this feature, the reader gets to understand the hidden messages that are lucked behind the candidate's conversations.

## Discussion of Findings

The data analysis conducted reveals that the pragma-discourse features used in the LP manifesto for the presidential election are transitivity processes (material, mental and verbal), sentence types (simple and complex), cohesive relations (reference, additive and adversative conjunctions), deixis (temporal and spatial), inversion, and thematisation. The material verbs show the process of doing and happenings in the election manifesto. It represents past actions and events of previous administrations, the current administrations, the situation of things in the country, and what the candidate plans to do when voted into office. Apart from the transitivity process, the dominant sentence types used in the election manifesto are simple and complex. The LP candidate employs a simple sentence to express a single idea and a complex sentence to convey more detailed ideas, reasons, and conditions. The election manifesto deployed content words laced with positive and negative connotations. Some of the content words are descriptive, and others are evaluative. Evidential clauses in the election manifesto serve significant purposes. Such clauses are deployed in the election manifestos to consolidate the arguments raised by the LP candidate. The corroboration of the arguments of the LP candidate is realised through the presentation of facts either through statistical figures or allusion. Pronominal reference is deployed in the election manifesto to show solidarity with their political party as well as with Nigerians and also to indicate inclusivity. Sentence inversion functions to foreground the policies and reforms in the election of manifesto of the LP candidate as well as the challenges confronting the Nigerian nation. From the analysis conducted above, Peter Obi employed pragma-discourse features to present himself positively by speaking about the reforms and policies that he plans to initiate in the country when voted into office. The same pragma discourse features are used to represent others (Bola et al. and the Buhari government) negatively by showing areas in the different sectors of the country where they have failed.

Speech acts are equally deployed in the election manifesto by the Labour Party candidate to relate his political agenda to the presidential candidates. The data examined showed

that the dominant speech acts used in Peter Obi's election manifesto are commissive and assertive speech acts. The commissive acts were used to convey Obi's plans, intentions and visions for Nigeria and Nigerians. The assertive speech acts in Obi's manifesto serve to expose the failure of the Buhari government and the APC party and to convey the reforms and policies which his government has prepared for Nigeria.

## Conclusion

Before the primary election, the presidential candidate of the Labour party delivered a manifesto that reflects the policies and reforms of his government. This manifesto portrayed a more conciliatory posture on the surface. However, a pragma-discourse study of the manifesto uncovers several ideological standpoints expressed in more subtle and covert means by carefully selecting linguistic choices that suit the persuasive nature of the political event of presidential election manifestoes. The election manifesto examined in this study reveals the significant roles that pragma-discourse features and choices play in constructing election manifestoes. These pragma discourse conveys directly or indirectly the Labour party candidate's political agenda and the proposed new government. Peter Obi employed pragma-discourse features in presenting himself positively and other political opponents, who in this case were Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Atiku Abubakar; the APC and PDP candidates, negatively. While the positive presentation of self is done explicitly, the negative representation of others is done covertly and subtly. In all, election manifesto is a valuable document that allowed the Labour Party candidate to showcase his plans and policies to the electorates.

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