



## Linguistic Strategies for Building National Consciousness through Political Speeches

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### Abstract

Political office holders are one of the key actors that can help in building national consciousness among Nigerians. They can use their speeches and broadcasts to create the spirit of inclusiveness and unity, thereby providing a fertile ground for patriotism and sense of national attachment to thrive in the country. The aim of this study, therefore, was to identify the linguistic strategies used by Nigerian political leaders in their speeches to imbibe unity and patriotism among the citizens. Data were collected from six speeches delivered by three Nigerian presidents on the country's Democracy Day and Independence Day broadcasts. The speeches were collected from the YouTube pages of Nigerian mainstream media. The audio of the speeches were transcribed into text to enable easier and deeper analysis. Qualitative analysis method was used to analyse the speeches to identify the strategic use of language in them. Two models of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar provided the theoretical anchor for this analysis. One of the models, Information Structure, was used to identify the information delivered in the speeches while the second model, Register, provided the perspective for identifying the choice of words adopted in the speeches. The study discovered that the presidents delivered information that indicated the country is facing challenges, which can only be tackled if the citizens become united and work together in harmony. It also discovered that words, which show inclusiveness, endearment, and comradeship, were greatly used in the speeches. The study, therefore, concluded that Nigerian political leaders can build national consciousness if they use language judiciously to encourage unity and patriotism.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is common knowledge that Nigeria as a country is divided along ethnic, religious, political, and social groups. This does not mean the country is at war but that certain incidents, which take place within the country, show that the citizens do not perceive themselves as one. Instances of this are found on social media, where the division is felt the most as Nigerians relate more with individuals who share the same culture, ethnicity, political ideology, and religion than with those they perceive as outsiders. This problem does not only cause tribalism, favouritism, bigotry, disunity, and other social ills but further discourages those affected from appreciating their citizenship and showing loyalty to the country. This makes one question the underlying cause of this problem and how it can be eliminated.

Researchers, such as Emoghene and Okolie (2020), Onyibor (2016), and Jacob and Ovir (2018), have identified the multi-ethnic nature of the country as a major cause of the disunity

in Nigeria. According to Jacob and Oviri (2018), the inequality experienced by these ethnic groups as a result of the differences in their sizes, natural resources, infrastructural development, access to state power, and education creates rivalry among them. This causes the members of these groups, especially those viewed as minor ethnic groups, to believe that they are being marginalised by the major groups. The implication of this is that those believing to be disadvantaged do not act in ways that promote the growth and development of the country.

Other factors that cause a lack of national consciousness among Nigerians are corruption, religious extremism, and politics (Nweke, 2007; Onyibor, 2016). The do-or-die style of Nigerian politics and the propaganda associated with the institution further deepen the division in the country. Corruption itself has caused Nigerians to lose hope in their country (Adebisi, et al., 2014) while religious extremism leads to intolerance among the citizens (Emoghene & Okolie, 2020). But despite all these problems, Nigerians need to be loyal and patriotic as those are the best ways to move the country forward.

Efforts have been made by the Nigerian government to integrate the country and encourage its citizens to understand and tolerate one another as they live and work in harmony. Initiatives, such as the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, the federal character principle, the federal system of government practised in the country, the National Anthem and National Pledge, and the creation of states, were all provided to enable tolerance, integration, and inclusiveness (Adebisi et al., 2014; Nweke, 2007). But despite all these provisions, many Nigerians have not shown faith, love, or loyalty to the nation.

One of the measures that may be worth considering as a way of promoting national consciousness among Nigerians is political speeches. Onyibor (2016) acknowledges that politics contributes to the disunity experienced in Nigeria because of the divisive statements made by politicians and the role played by propaganda. But despite this observation, politics can still become an instrument of nation-building if its agents (the politicians) use the institution positively. This is to say that political leaders can make Nigerians confident in their country and further inspire them to work towards the growth of the nation. They can achieve this through the proper use of language.

This study aims to identify how political officeholders use language as a vital tool for promoting national consciousness. Specifically, it identifies the linguistic features and strategies in public political speeches that can promote national consciousness. With these, the study can provide an effective measure that will encourage Nigerians to stay loyal to their country.

## **2. LANGUAGE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

Language is a system of communication that is commonly used by man. It is a tool that enables people to deliver messages, express opinions, give ideas and instructions, persuade and influence people, and express feelings (Ansa, 2004). Language is also used to transmit culture, beliefs, and social values and norms (Baji, 2019). It can build or destroy relationships as a result of what is said or written (Baji, 2019). Language can also cause or resolve conflicts (Yusuf, 2012; Ansa, 2004). All these qualities and functions of language make it a potent tool for promoting national consciousness.

According to Baji (2019), language, as a primary means of communication, is a critical tool for national integration and sustainable development. He explains that this is so because language aids learning. Learning in this case includes acquiring knowledge about social norms, national values, cultural values, and social values. This means that an individual can learn more about his country because there is language to make it possible. Baji further explains that when the appropriate language is used to address people, it gives room for cordial relationships to build, establish, and grow. This agrees with the fact that if political leaders use language properly, they can help in national integration and building as well as promote national consciousness.

Researchers, such as Yusuf (2012), Ansa (2004), and Ogwudile (2019), have observed that language, especially the English language, can give Nigeria the needed instrument for bringing the citizens together and encouraging them to contribute towards building the nation.

Ogwudile (2019) discloses that the use of the English language as the language of interaction within a group that comprises people from different ethnic communities helps eliminate suspicion among the members. This means that maintaining the use of this language, which is a unifier of people from different linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, can guarantee nationalism.

Yusuf (2012) also perceives English as the mediator in Nigeria, meaning that it is the best language for reaching every Nigerian citizen, especially in times of crisis. According to Ansa (2004), using this language to address multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multilingual Nigerians can make them develop a sense of belonging since they will feel included in the conversation. This, in turn, will create room for promoting and imbibing national consciousness.

Mishina and Iskandar (2019) further disclose that language is a social tool that binds communities together. This, they explain, is because people tend to associate more with people they share the same language with. Apart from that, as a primary tool for communication, language enables members of a community to interact with one another. They can use the device to make their challenges known and also seek help when the need arises. Mishina and Iskandar also believe that language is a tool for promoting national consciousness because when leaders use the device to communicate effectively with their community members, they will create a bond with them. This bond will provide the fertile ground for projecting, requesting, and receiving the citizens' loyalty towards the community. Based on this, it can be said that, in the case of a nation, the appropriate use of language by the leaders while communicating with citizens can promote national consciousness.

According to Akujobi (2019), language is very critical in nation-building because it aids education, trade, politics and social activities. He explains that the use of language in performing these activities can determine how people perceive their country. For example, in Nigeria, English is the common language that is used in schools, local and international trade, political speeches, and social interactions. This makes it easier for people from different speech communities to interact and transact easily without encountering language barriers despite the multilingual nature of the country. Akujobi maintains that the use of English in interactions makes people feel included in the affairs of the country and, as a result, develops the desire to participate actively in events that will aid nation-building.

Orji and Umeobi (2023) argue that language aids national consciousness by helping people develop an identity that aligns with their culture and, to a large extent, their country. They argue that when people use language they are proud of, they proudly identify themselves as citizens of the community. This explains why Walton (2022) upholds that people become emotionally attached to their communities because they (their communities) represent their (citizens') identities. As Ahsan et al. (2024) explain, people's identity, which is developed through their language of choice, defines who they are. In other words, when people select a particular language as their medium of interaction, they assume a particular identity that aligns with the users of that particular language. This, in extension, means that people's language can influence their national consciousness since they speak the language of the community or nation they wish to identify with.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two theories are adopted for this study. These are the Theory of Register and Information Structure. Both theories were propounded by M.A.K. Halliday, a British linguist. The theories are also models of Systemic Functional Linguistics, sometimes known as Systemic Functional Grammar. This latter theory was also propounded by Halliday to describe how language in communication performs different functions.

#### 3.1. The Theory of Register

The Theory of Register was propounded by Halliday in 1978 (Qiao, 2022). He used the theory to explain the linguistic choices people make while communicating at a particular point in time (Ling, 2013; Lukin et al., 2008; Qiao, 2022). These choices can be ruled by context of

situation or context of culture (Ling, 2013; Lukin et al., 2008). Context of situation refers to the choices people make as a result of the event, where the language is used. On the same hand, context of culture considers the influence of socio-cultural setting and participants' background on linguistic choices. In this case, the Theory of Register considers context, whether situational or cultural, as the primary determinants of language choices. It considers how language is selected according to the functions it performs in a particular context.

To study language use in communication with this theory, Halliday proposes three tenets – field, tenor, and mode – which can enable the intensive scrutiny of why certain linguistic choices were made. **Field** is the tenet that describes how language is selected as a result of incidents or topics of discussion (Ling, 2013). Its principles argues that topics of discussion, theme of discourse, and the activities involved in the discussion affect the choice of language or words because people select specific vocabulary set when communicating about a particular thing. Hence, field looks at choices made as a result of WHAT is discussed.

**Tenor** refers to the choice of language or words as a result of the relationship between the interlocutors as well as their socio-cultural backgrounds (Ling, 2013; Lukin et al., 2008). Here, the factor that determines linguistic choices is not what is discussed but WHO is involved in the interaction. Finally, **mode** refers to choices made as a result of selected communication channel and the intention of the communication (Ling, 2013). Based on the principles of this tenet, there are differences in linguistic choices when language is used to instruct, persuade, reflect, placate, and inspire. Likewise, choices are different when communication is delivered through face-to-face interaction and when it is delivered in writing.

The use of this theory in the study helps in identifying and categorising word choices in the studied broadcasts. It helps in discovering expressions that can encourage the promotion of national consciousness among Nigerians. In addition, it shows how Nigerians can identify the purpose of the broadcast and the relationship that can be established as a result of the information delivered.

### **3.2. Information Structure**

Information Structure was propounded by Halliday in 1967 to describe how language users organise information in utterances to enable effective communication and comprehension (Matic, 2015; Aghaei et al., 2022). This theory is a model of the Textual Function tenet of Metafunction model of Systemic Functional Grammar. The principles of Textual Function describe how language is physically composed in communication (Matic, 2015). As a result, Information Structure is concerned with the physical organisation of information in utterances, especially at the clausal level, which signals the messages being conveyed.

The proposition of this theory discloses that when language users make utterances, they arrange the information in the utterance based on their assumption of their audience knowledge (Arnold et al., 2015; Matic, 2015). Here, utterances are segmented into what is known to the audience and what the audience is about to find out, with the former placed at the beginning of the utterance as the subject and the latter coming afterwards as the predicate. This way, the speaker helps his audience decode what he should add to his knowledge bank.

Information Structure proposes that there are three ways information can be arranged in utterances. These are Given vs New, Topic vs Focus, and Topic vs Comment (Matic, 2015; Aghaei et al., 2022). The Given vs New structure considers how new information is introduced into a conversation. Here, information is arranged in such a way that what is known (Given Information) is placed at the beginning of a sentence while what is unknown (New Information) comes immediately afterward. The given information is usually the subject of the clause while the new information comprises the finite verb and other items following it.

Topic vs Focus refers to the sectioning of information in an utterance according to what is being discussed (the topic) and what listeners should pay attention to about the issue (focus). In this case, the speaker is not only delivering new information but also clarifying issues, correcting wrong impressions, influencing and persuading his audience, and instructing the audience (Cheng, 2012). Finally, the Topic vs Comment structure refers to the arrangement of information in utterances so that the issue being discussed (topic) is placed at the beginning of



an utterance while what is said about it (comment) comes afterwards (Matic, 2015). This structure shows how speakers use language to frame a concept, which can influence how it is perceived by his audience.

The Information Structure theory provides this study with the theoretical anchor for identifying the information delivered in the examined broadcast. It also enables the identification of how the participating speakers attempted to use language to promote national consciousness and influence Nigerians into working for the progress of the country.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

Data for this study are collected from six broadcasts of three Nigerian presidents – Fmr. President Goodluck Jonathan (2010 – 2015), Fmr. President Muhammadu Buhari (2015 – 2023), and President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (2023 – present). The selected broadcasts are those delivered during the country's Democracy Day and Independence Day celebrations. The purposive sampling method is used to select two speeches delivered by each participant. Attention is paid to the acoustic qualities of each broadcast before selection.

The speeches were collected from the YouTube channels of Nigerian mainstream media that broadcast them live. This way, it becomes certain that the collected speeches were not manipulated or edited in any way. The audio of the collected broadcasts are transcribed into text to enable easier collection of data and deeper analysis. Sentences that are related to promotion of national consciousness are selected for further analysis, using the qualitative data analysis method. Halliday's Theory of Register and Information Structure provides the theoretical anchor for studying the broadcasts, identifying how they used language, disclosing how information is arranged in them, and discussing the available linguistic features.

##### 4.1. Data Analysis

Data for this study is analysed to capture the information delivered in the broadcasts and how such information can influence national consciousness. It is broadly segmented into two, which are broadcast at Democracy Day and broadcast at Independence Day. For the sake of this study, the participants are coded as PGEJ (President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan), PMB (President Muhammadu Buhari), and PBAT (President Bola Ahmed Tinubu).

##### 4.1.1. Broadcast at Democracy Day

Three broadcast speeches made on Democracy Day celebrations were collected for the study. These speeches are identified according to the presidents that delivered them.

##### Excerpt 1: PGEJ 2012 Democracy Day Broadcast

1. *We have refused to be limited by our differences.*
2. *Let us individually and collectively, continue to keep the spirit of this day alive.*
3. *We must remember where we are coming from, so we can appreciate how far we have travelled.*
4. *What matters most to all of us, is Nigeria.*
5. *We have a duty to be loyal to our country.*
6. *This nation exists because we are one.*
7. *We must, therefore, remain as one family, and work together to defend our country.*

Excerpt 1 presents some of the utterances made by PGEJ at the 2012 Democracy Day. These are statements that can encourage the spirit of national consciousness among Nigerians. A closer analysis of the key clauses in each statement is further presented in Information Structure 1.

##### Information Structure 1

The arrangement of information in the utterances presented in Excerpt 1 is presented in Tables 1 to 7.

**Table 1: *We have refused to be limited by our differences.***

Topic	Focus
We	have refused to be limited by our differences

**Table 2: *Let us individually and collectively, continue to keep the spirit of this day alive.***

Topic	Focus
(We) – individually and collectively	(should) continue to keep the spirit of this day alive

**Table 3: *We must remember where we are coming from, so we can appreciate how far we have travelled.***

Topic	Focus
We	must remember (Nigeria)

**Table 4: *What matters most to all of us, is Nigeria.***

Topic	Focus
What matters	is Nigeria

**Table 5: *We have a duty to be loyal to our country.***

Topic	Focus
We	have a duty to be loyal to our country

**Table 6: *This nation exists because we are one.***

Topic	Focus
This nation (Nigeria)	Exists
We	are one

**Table 7: *We must, therefore, remain as one family, and work together to defend our country.***

Topic	Focus
We	must remain as one family
We	(must) work together to defend our country

The arrangement of information in the excerpts above reveal that the speaker used the Topic vs Focus structure to deliver messages that can promote national consciousness. The information delivered includes the need to stay united despite the differences among Nigerians (Tables 1, 6, & 7) and be loyal to the country (Tables 2 – 7). The speaker adopted informal language, which reflects the cordial relationship he wants to establish with the audience. The words also have political undertone, which shows that the topic of discussion is about the country, governance, and patriotism. Words, such as “defend” (Table 7), “country” (Tables 5 & 7), “Nigeria” (Table 4), and “loyal” (Table 5), bring forth the essence of the broadcast to the foreground, thereby showing that it is for promoting national consciousness. Finally, the use of “we” in most of the statements means that the speaker is inviting the audience to partake in the conversation. It also intends to build the spirit of comradeship.

### **Excerpt 2: PMB 2020 Democracy Day Broadcast**

1. *It is a day to honour our founding fathers who toiled to establish our republic and every Nigerian who has worked tirelessly to sustain it.*
2. *The dedication of our health and other essential services staff towards containing this virus is a testament of our courage and resilience as a people and as a great nation, and I use this opportunity to say thank you to all of you for your service to the nation.*
3. *There is no doubt that this pandemic has affected the global economy and all known socio-economic systems.*
4. *Like many Nigerians, I feel the grief and pain not only as your President but also as someone who has lost a close member of my staff and some relatives and friends.*

5. *Nigeria has survived many crises before and came out stronger.*
6. *I am confident that by God’s grace we shall overcome this one and emerge stronger and more purposeful.*

Excerpt 2 shows some of the utterances made by PMB at the 2020 Democracy Day celebration, which could promote national consciousness. Further analysis of these utterances are presented in Information Structure 2.

**Information Structure 2**

Below are the arrangements of information in the utterances presented under Excerpt 2.

**Table 8:** *It is a day to honour our founding fathers who toiled to establish our republic and every Nigerian who has worked tirelessly to sustain it.*

Given	New
It (today)	is a day to honour our founding fathers
who (our founding fathers)	toiled to establish our republic
(and a day to honour)	every Nigerian who has worked tirelessly to sustain it

**Table 9:** *The dedication of our health and other essential services staff towards containing this virus is a testament of our courage and resilience as a people and as a great nation, and I use this opportunity to say thank you to all of you for your service to the nation.*

Given	New
The dedication of our health and other essential services staff towards containing this virus	is a testament of our courage and resilience as a people and as a great nation
I	say thank you to all of you for your service to the nation

**Table 10:** *There is no doubt that this pandemic has affected the global economy and all known socio-economic systems.*

Given	New
This pandemic	has affected the global economy and all known socio-economic systems

**Table 11:** *Like many Nigerians, I feel the grief and pain not only as your President but also as someone who has lost a close member of my staff and some relatives and friends.*

Topic	Focus
I	feel the grief and pain (like many Nigerians)

**Table 12:** *Nigeria has survived many crises before and came out stronger.*

Topic	Comment
Nigeria	has survived many crises
(Nigeria)	came out stronger

**Table 13:** *I am confident that by God’s grace we shall overcome this one and emerge stronger and more purposeful.*

Topic	Focus
We	shall overcome this one
(we)	shall emerge stronger and more purposeful

The analysis of the statements taken from PMB’s 2020 Democracy Day broadcast shows that he used informal language to communicate with Nigerians. This is a sign that he wants to establish a cordial relationship with them. Furthermore, the choice of words shows that the discussion is political and related to the country. This can be seen in the use of “republic” (Table 8), nation (Table 9), Nigeria (Table 12), and “president” (Table 11). With

this, the audience will be aware of the topic of discussion. Furthermore, the speaker delivered information using the Given vs New Information structure, the Topic vs Focus structure, and the Topic vs Comment structure. With these, he was able to deliver new information (Tables 8 – 10), indicate that the country is progressing (Table 12), and invite Nigerians to unite (Tables 11 & 13). Finally, the use of “we” in some of the statements is meant to induce the spirit of national consciousness, comradeship, unity and loyalty to the nation.

**Excerpt 3: BAT 2023 Democracy Day Broadcast**

1. *Fellow compatriots, we celebrate a day that has remained a watershed in our nation’s history, not just today, but for every June 12, for the endless future that our beloved country shall exist and wax stronger and stronger.*
2. *The point is that we must never take this democracy for granted.*
3. *We must forever jealously guard and protect it like a precious jewel.*
4. *For, a people can never truly appreciate the freedoms and rights democracy guarantees them until they lose it.*
5. *Painfully, I have asked you, my compatriots, to sacrifice a little more for the survival of our country.*
6. *For your trust and belief in us, I assure you that your sacrifice shall not be in vain.*

The analysis of the utterances in Excerpt 3, which were utterances from the 2023 Democracy Day broadcast, is presented in Information Structure 3.

**Information Structure 3**

**Table 14:** *Fellow compatriots, we celebrate a day that has remained a watershed in our nation’s history, not just today, but for every June 12, for the endless future that our beloved country shall exist and wax stronger and stronger.*

Topic	Focus
We	Celebrate
A day	(that) has remained a watershed in our nation’s history
Our beloved country	shall exist
(our beloved country)	(shall) wax stronger and stronger

**Table 15:** *The point is that we must never take this democracy for granted.*

Topic	Focus
We	must never take this democracy for granted

**Table 16:** *We must forever jealously guard and protect it like a precious jewel.*

Topic	Focus
We	Must guard (it – democracy)
(we)	(must) protect it (democracy)

**Table 17:** *For, a people can never truly appreciate the freedoms and rights democracy guarantees them until they lose it.*

Topic	Focus
A people	can never truly appreciate the freedoms and rights (democracy guarantees them)
(until) they	Lose it (freedom and rights democracy guarantees them)

**Table 18:** *Painfully, I have asked you, my compatriots, to sacrifice a little more for the survival of our country.*

Topic	Focus
I	have asked you, my compatriots, to sacrifice a little more for the survival of our country



**Table 19: For your trust and belief in us, I assure you that your sacrifice shall not be in vain.**

Topic	Focus
Your sacrifice	shall not be in vain

The broadcast delivered by PBAT is made with informal language, which also shows an invitation to a cordial relationship. Words, such as “compatriots”, “nation”, “democracy”, and “country” are related to politics, thereby signalling that the speech is about governance. Words, such as “fellow”, “our”, “we”, and “us”, indicates that the speaker is involving the audience in the conversation and leadership. The arrangement of information in the broadcast reveal that the speaker adopted the Topic vs Focus structure to deliver messages that promote national consciousness. This means the statements were meant to draw the attention of the audience to the need to be loyal to the country.

#### 4.1.2. Broadcast at Independence Day

Three broadcasts made on Independence Day celebrations were collected from the three participating presidents. These speeches are presented and analysed below.

#### Excerpt 4: PGEJ 2012 Independence Day Broadcast

1. *On this special day, I call on every Nigerian to remain steadfast, because our nation is indeed making progress.*
2. *I call on every Nigerian to rediscover that special spirit that enables us to triumph over every adversity as a people.*
3. *We weathered the storm of the civil war, we have refused to be broken by sectarian crises; we have remained a strong nation.*
4. *I bring to you today, a message of renewed hope and faith in the immense possibilities that lie ahead.*
5. *Those challenges should not deter us.*

These utterances were delivered by PGEJ on the country’s 2012 Independence Day. They are analysed to identify the use of language and information delivered in Information Structure 4.

#### Information Structure 4

The arrangement of information in the utterances captured under Excerpt 4 is disclosed in Tables 20 – 24.

**Table 20: *On this special day, I call on every Nigerian to remain steadfast, because our nation is indeed making progress.***

Topic	Focus
I	call on every Nigerian to remain steadfast
Our nation	is indeed making progress

**Table 21: *I call on every Nigerian to rediscover that special spirit that enables us to triumph over every adversity as a people.***

Topic	Focus
I	call on every Nigerian to rediscover that special spirit
That (special spirit)	enables us to triumph over every adversity as a people

**Table 22: *We weathered the storm of the civil war, we have refused to be broken by sectarian crises; we have remained a strong nation.***

Topic	Focus
We	weathered the storm of the civil war

We	have refused to be broken by sectarian crises
We	have remained a strong nation

**Table 23: *I bring to you today, a message of renewed hope and faith in the immense possibilities that lie ahead.***

Topic	Focus
I	bring to you today, a message of renewed hope and faith (in the immense possibilities that lie ahead)

**Table 24: *Those challenges should not deter us.***

Topic	Focus
Those challenges	should not deter us

PGEJ used the topic and focus structure in delivering the information that could foster national consciousness. This means the utterances can persuade the audience to become patriotic Nigerians. The audience can decode what is communicated because the speaker used every day language. The choice of words, such as “nation” and “civil war”, tells that the conversation is about politics while “our”, “we”, and “us” show inclusivity and comradeship. In addition, the information delivered about the resilience of Nigerians in almost all the captured utterances is meant to encourage the audience to adopt the spirit of love for the nation.

**Excerpt 5: PMB 2022 Independence Day Broadcast**

1. *I assure you that your resilience and patience would not be in vain.*
2. *Nigeria was one of the countries that defied global predictions of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic because of our resilience, commitment and passion with which we individually and collectively managed the pandemic.*
3. *Fellow Nigerians, in the past few years we have witnessed and overcome a good number of challenges that would ordinarily have destroyed our Nation.*
4. *However, the indefatigable spirit of the Nigerian people has ensured that we overcome our challenges.*
5. *It is in this spirit that I call on all of us to individually and collectively bring to the fore in dealing with all our development issues.*

These utterances are further analysed to identify their language choice and information delivered in Information Structure 5.

**Information Structure 5**

The arrangement of information in the utterances presented in Excerpt 5 is disclosed in Tables 25 – 29.

**Table 25: *I assure you that your resilience and patience would not be in vain.***

Topic	Focus
Your resilience and patience	would not be in vain

**Table 26: *Nigeria was one of the countries that defied global predictions of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic because of our resilience, commitment and passion with which we individually and collectively managed the pandemic.***

Topic	Comment
Nigeria	defied global predictions of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic because of our resilience, commitment and passion
We	managed the pandemic (individually and collectively)

**Table 27:** *Fellow Nigerians, in the past few years we have witnessed and overcome a good number of challenges that would ordinarily have destroyed our nation.*

Topic	Focus
We	have witnessed (challenges)
We	(have) overcome a good number of challenges
(the challenges)	would ordinarily have destroyed our nation

**Table 28:** *However, the indefatigable spirit of the Nigerian people has ensured that we overcome our challenges.*

Topic	Focus
the indefatigable spirit of the Nigerian people	has ensured that (we overcome our challenges)

**Table 29:** *It is in this spirit that I call on all of us to individually and collectively bring to the fore in dealing with all our development issues.*

Topic	Focus
I	call on all of us to individually and collectively bring to the fore in dealing with all our development issues

This speaker delivered information through the Topic vs Focus and Topic vs Comment methods. The former structure enables him to channel the attention of his audience to the words of encouragement he gives them (Tables 25 & 29) and achievements they made while working together (Tables 27 & 28). The latter structure enables him to frame Nigeria as a great nation and Nigerians as great people (Table 26). The speaker used the words, “you”, “our”, “we”, and “us” to show inclusivity and invitation to the audience into the communication. Words, such as “nation” and “Nigeria”, can alert the audience that the discussion is about governance. Finally, the use of everyday language will ensure ease of comprehension and, therefore, develop the spirit of national consciousness.

### Excerpt 6: PBAT 2023 Independence Day Broadcast

1. *Let us, at this very moment, affirm that as Nigerians, we are all endowed with the sacred rights and individual gifts that God has bestowed on us as a nation and as human beings.*
2. *No one is greater or lesser than the other.*
3. *And no other nation or power on this earth shall keep us from our rightful place and destiny.*
4. *This nation belongs to you, dear people, love and cherish it as your very own.*
5. *We are joined by a common thirst for peace and progress, by the common dream of prosperity and harmony and by the unifying ideals of tolerance and justice.*
6. *Fellow compatriots, the journey ahead will not be navigated by fear or hatred.*
7. *We can only achieve our better Nigeria through courage, compassion and commitment as one indivisible unit.*

These utterances are analysed in Information Structure 6. This enables the identification of the information structure type the speaker used, the information he delivered, and the choice of language he made.

### Information Structure 6

The utterances presented in Excerpt 6 are analysed in Tables 30 to 36. Here, the way information is arranged in them is captured to display what is said, how it is said, and why it is said.

**Table 30:** *Let us, at this very moment, affirm that as Nigerians, we are all endowed with the sacred rights and individual gifts that God has bestowed on us as a nation and as human beings.*

Topic	Comment
We (as Nigerians)	are all endowed with the sacred rights and individual gifts
God	has bestowed (sacred rights and individual gifts) on us as a nation and as human beings

**Table 31:** *No one is greater or lesser than the other.*

Topic	Focus
No one	is greater or lesser than the other

**Table 32:** *And no other nation or power on this earth shall keep us from our rightful place and destiny.*

Topic	Focus
no other nation or power on this earth	shall keep us from our rightful place and destiny.

**Table 33:** *This nation belongs to you, dear people, love and cherish it as your very own.*

Topic	Focus
This nation	belongs to you
(you)	(should) love and cherish it as your very own

**Table 34:** *We are joined by a common thirst for peace and progress, by the common dream of prosperity and harmony and by the unifying ideals of tolerance and justice.*

Topic	Focus
We	are joined by a common thirst for peace and progress, by the common dream of prosperity and harmony and by the unifying ideals of tolerance and justice.

**Table 35:** *Fellow compatriots, the journey ahead will not be navigated by fear or hatred.*

Topic	Comment
the journey ahead	will not be navigated by fear or hatred

**Table 36:** *We can only achieve our better Nigeria through courage, compassion and commitment as one indivisible unit.*

Topic	Focus
We	can only achieve our better Nigeria through courage, compassion and commitment as one indivisible unit

The speaker adopted mostly the Topic vs Focus structure for delivering messages that can promote national consciousness. With this, he is able to invite the audience to love the country and join in nation building (Tables 32, 33, 36) and to reveal the unity the country should experience (Tables 31 & 34). The Topic vs Comment structure was used to frame Nigerians as resilient people. The use of everyday language will further ensure national consciousness because the utterances can easily be decoded. The speaker also used “we”, “our”, “us” and “you” to show inclusivity.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious country, where diverse people live in suspicion of one another because of the differences in their language, beliefs, norms, and values. Other factors, including corruption, religious extremism, and politics, also

contribute to the disunity and lukewarm spirit of patriotism and nationalism in the country. Fortunately, politics can play a role in uniting the nation if the key office holders know how to use language appropriately while communicating with the audience.

Communication and appropriate use of language alone cannot promote national consciousness if leaders do not deliver the right information to the audience. The six broadcasts studied in this research show that the presidents used language strategically in their speeches. They identified Nigerians as people with positive qualities and admired their resilience. They used words that show the citizens are included in the governance and have important place in the country irrespective of their differences. The speakers further revealed that the country can only progress if the citizens work together. With this, they invited citizens into the conversation and assigned them important roles towards moving the country forward. This strategic use of language shows that Nigerian political office holders can promote national consciousness if they use their public speeches to encourage patriotism, invite citizens to participate in governance, and motivate them to unite as one.

### 5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Nigerian politicians should communicate more with the masses. As they do this, they should use language the masses can identify with and further deliver information that can promote national consciousness.
2. Further studies should be conducted to identify information or language choices that repel Nigerians and discourage them from partaking in nation building.

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## Appendix

### YouTube Links to Broadcast

1. President Tinubu's 2023 Democracy Day Speech.  
TVC News Nigeria  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joo-BUXHY1U&t=87s>
2. President Tinubu's 2023 Independence Day Address  
TVC News Nigeria  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8KeBVH\\_VWE&t=14s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8KeBVH_VWE&t=14s)
3. President Muhammadu Buhari's 2020 Democracy Day Broadcast  
TVC News Nigeria  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_E8m6796rY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_E8m6796rY)
4. President Muhammadu Buhari's 2022 Independence Day Broadcast  
TVC News Nigeria  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mj5Xt2s1RUc&t=285s>
5. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan 2012 Democracy Day Broadcast  
NTA News  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kw\\_4TOJDCSA&t=201s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kw_4TOJDCSA&t=201s)
6. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan 2012 Independence Day Broadcast  
Channels Television  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGLEhJjV32A&t=48s>