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MEANING CONSTRUCTION, IDENTITY REPRESENTATION, AND POLITICAL MESSAGING IN THE CAMPAIGN JINGLES OF APC AND SDP IN THE 2022 EKITI GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

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Abstract: In Nigerian political campaigns, radio jingles are a pervasive and influential medium for the formation of public opinion. This study focuses on the 2022 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, a significant off-cycle contest that served as a barometer for the subsequent 2023 national elections and reflected the evolving characteristics of Nigerian electoral politics. The study aims to investigate meaning construction, identity representation, and political messaging in the campaign jingles of the two leading parties. It specifically explores how linguistic choices are strategically deployed to construct candidate identities and reinforce competing political ideologies. The corpus consists of twelve purposively selected radio jingles broadcast by the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Adopting a mixed-method design, the analysis is grounded in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) to examine transitivity, mood, and modality. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used to interpret the correlation of language, political power, and socio-political context. The findings reveal distinct discursive strategies. APC jingles predominantly used material processes to construct their candidate as an agent of continuity and stable governance. In contrast, SDP employed relational and material processes to frame their candidate as a moral figure offering restoration and economic relief. A central finding is the symbolic contest waged through metaphor: SDP's traditionalist "white horse" was discursively challenged by APC's modernist "luxurious car," signifying a deeper ideological clash. Furthermore, mood analysis showed APC favoring declarative statements to inform, with SDP using more imperative and exclamatory clauses to mobilize and evoke emotion. This study demonstrates that political jingles are complex ritualistic texts that function as subtle instruments of socio-political control. By revealing how linguistic devices manufacture consent and reframe narratives, the research shows the discursive mechanisms of power and persuasion in the contemporary African electoral sphere.

Keywords: political discourse analysis, campaign jingles, identity construction, systemic functional grammar, critical discourse analysis, Nigerian politics, metaphor.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising, as a strategic communication tool, plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, particularly during political campaigns. Political advertisements serve as a platform for political parties to construct, project, and negotiate meanings and identities to connect with the voters, establish credibility, and secure electoral success. Radio, a widely accessible medium in Nigeria, remains a critical channel for political communication due to its affordability, reach, and ability to penetrate diverse socio-economic, religious, and linguistic demographics. During the 2022 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, political parties extensively utilized radio advertisements to engage with the electorate, creating a fertile ground for studying how meaning and identity were crafted and communicated. A jingle is a pre-recorded message that is accompanied by songs, chants, and percussions aired on the radio frequently to advertise a product or pass information to the populace. According to Ikeokwu (2023, p. 593), “The jingle is a short catchy message either accompanied with songs, music, drama or slogans that easily registers in the psyche of the listeners”. Thus, the jingle becomes a potent means of selling a political candidate to the masses and a way of spreading his/her political ideologies during election campaigns in Nigeria.

The Ekiti gubernatorial election holds significant importance in Nigerian politics as one of the staggered off-cycle elections resulting from earlier political and judicial crises. Serving as the last major state election before the 2023 general elections, it functioned as a barometer for the political parties to gauge voters’ sentiment, party strength and popularity, and the effectiveness of political messaging nationwide. Its timing, just months before the general elections, made it a strategic opportunity for political actors to assess public response to their campaigns and refine their strategies for the national polls, and a critical site for discourse analysis on campaign strategies, voter mobilization, and identity construction in Nigeria. By analysing the linguistic elements embedded in the jingles of political parties in the 2022 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, Nigeria, this study seeks to unveil the underlying strategies employed to persuade voters, construct party identities, and reflect the socio-political landscape of Ekiti State during the 2022 gubernatorial election campaign. This paper aims to research the meaning construction, identity representation, and political messaging in the campaign jingles by exploring the linguistic choices and identity markers evident in the radio jingles aired during the gubernatorial campaign. It investigates how political parties navigated cultural nuances and voter sentiments to construct persuasive messages.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The analysis of political campaign jingles from a linguistic perspective has garnered attention in discourse studies, particularly concerning identity construction and meaning-making. Political discourse, as a subfield of discourse analysis, seeks to understand how language is used to construct political ideologies, project candidates’ identities, and persuade the electorate (Van Dijk, 2006). In recent times, there have been diverse studies on Nigerian political advertisements

generally. Many of these studies using Nigerian political campaign jingles have examined their linguistic and persuasive strategies. Opeibi (2009) examined multimodal political advertising in Nigeria, emphasizing the role of code-switching and indigenous proverbs in political persuasion. Makinde & Adejumo (2024) examine the linguistic strategies used in political discourse to appeal to voters through a multimodal discourse analysis of campaign posters and billboards. Using Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) multimodal framework, the study explores how political candidates' use of language, visuals, slogans, colours, and other meaning-making resources enhances political discourse, as evident in their posters and billboards.

Advertisement has been a form of mass communication closely linked with the world of politics, commerce, marketing, and linguistics, and it is a powerful tool for the flow of information from politicians to the voters/electorates through an effective use of language. In the process of creating advertisements, the choice of expression is of crucial importance. Vaičėnienė (2006, p.43) claims that "In order to capture attention, convey the message and persuade the consumer, advertising texts use a range of manipulative language devices". Also commenting on how the ideology of the advertisement relates to the conditions in the society, Dyer (1982) explains: "It is important to be aware not just of the content, but also of the structure of signs in ads, the way meanings are exchanged, the way signifier and signified work, the way ads incorporate other reference systems and ideologies (even advertising itself), and the way they structure us into the ad and call upon us to create meaning. Only in this way can we understand the way ideology works and ties advertising to the existing conditions of society" (Dyer, 1982, p.187). Stating the extreme care that one should take about the use of language in advertisements, Ranade (1998, p.3) declares "...incredible, the amount of damage one may cause with a slight play on words here and there or a twist in the title, or even by the wilful omission of a single comma". The choice of language in advertisements, especially political jingles, may be dependent on several contextual factors such as the purpose of creating the jingle, the relationship of the political figure involved and the masses, the experience and the ideology of the political candidate, the content of the jingle, and the structures that exist within the linguistic system of the language. These are the factors considered in the current study for the analysis of the meaning construction, identity representation, and political messaging in the campaign jingles.

Several studies have used either or both SFG and CDA to analyse political texts. Eggins (2004) posits that the choice of process types in political discourse reveals a speaker's ideological positioning. She argues further that material processes (e.g., "build," "transform"), for instance, are commonly used in political promises, while relational processes (e.g., "is," "becomes") construct identity claims. Thompson (2014) used SFG to analyse political speeches, revealing how modality and mood choices influence voter perception. Similarly, Adetunji (2006) applied SFG to Nigerian political discourse, demonstrating how linguistic choices reflect cultural and political ideologies.

CDA has also been extensively used to analyse campaign strategies, media representations, and political identity construction. Fairclough (2003) examined the role of discourse in political campaigns, emphasizing how politicians use language to construct an image of trustworthiness and competence. Ademilokun (2013) focused on discursive features of selected political song texts of the 2011 Electioneering Campaign Rallies in South-Western Nigeria. Omiodara, Ajiboye, and Abioye (2020) take a critical discourse analysis approach to reveal the inherent meanings in, and socio-cultural implications of, the discourse of the sampled political jingles. Taiwo (2010) applied CDA to Nigerian presidential campaign speeches, highlighting how lexical choices and syntactic structures reinforce political dominance. The present study takes both SFG and CDA approaches to analyse the meaning construction, identity representation, and political messaging in the cam-

paign jingles. By focusing on the interplay between linguistic choices, rhetorical devices, and semiotic elements, this study offers a nuanced perspective that complements and extends existing research in the field.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis as the theoretical framework for the analysis of the campaign jingles. SFG is a theory of language and a methodology for analyzing texts and their contexts of use. Due to its dual nature, SFG aims to explain how individuals use language and how language is structured for its different usages (Eggins, 1994). Halliday (1978, p. 53) makes four central claims about language: “Language is functional in terms of what it can do or what can be done with it; Language is semantic in that it is used to make meanings; Language is semiotic in that it is a process of making meanings by selecting “from the total set of options that constitute what can be meant”; The language meanings generated and exchanged are motivated by their social and cultural contexts”. In SFL theory, language is viewed as being divided into three hierarchically interrelated strata. Firstly, there is the expression stratum, which is the material surface of language, either as speech or writing. This is the physical ‘realisation’ of the second stratum, that of the lexicogrammar, which corresponds to the conceptual level of the simple sentence or clause. The lexicogrammatical stratum itself is the realisation of the third stratum, that of the discourse semantics, which corresponds to the patterning of larger-scale textual structures above the level of the clause. These three strata in turn are related to three hierarchically arranged strata of context: the context of situation (the immediate situation in which a particular text is produced or consumed); the context of culture (the wider institutional and societal context of the text); and ideology.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has emerged as a robust framework for interrogating the relationships between language, power, ideology, and society. Among its most influential proponents, Norman Fairclough (1995; 2003) offers a version of CDA that sees discourse not only as text but also as a form of social practice that both reflects and shapes social structures. Fairclough’s model is based on a three-dimensional framework, involving: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. Through this model, language is positioned as a tool for constructing, maintaining, and sometimes resisting power relations in specific sociopolitical contexts. Fairclough’s emphasis on intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and the ideological function of language makes his framework highly appropriate for exploring how candidates such as Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji (BAO) and Segun Oni are represented in political jingles within Ekiti State.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a primarily qualitative design supported by quantitative elements (frequency counts) to examine the meaning and identity in the radio jingle advertisements of the two leading political parties during the 2022 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State. The methodology is informed by the interpretive paradigm, which seeks to understand the subjective and contextual dimensions of communication. Radio jingles aired by the two major political parties – All Progressive Congress (APC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) – during the campaign period were collected from local radio stations in Ekiti State. The radio stations are Ekiti FM, 91.5 (Ekiti state government radio station), FRESH FM, 106.9 (a private radio station), and Progress FM 100.5 (federal government radio station in Ekiti state). The selection focused on advertisements broadcast between April

and June 2022, aligning with the pre-election and campaign phases. Purposive sampling was employed to select six jingles each that reflect diverse political party affiliations, linguistic strategies, and thematic representations for each of the two political parties. The sample includes advertisements from the two leading political parties, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which ensures a comprehensive representation of campaign messages. A lexico-grammatical analysis was conducted to identify the advertisements' recurring themes, symbols, and identity markers to see how the political actors are represented. This approach enabled the exploration of how political parties addressed voters' concerns, constructed narratives, and projected their ideologies. The advertisements were made in the Yoruba language, Ekiti dialect, and Nigerian Pidgin. Thus, the analysis was carried out based on the linguistic features of the original language. The English version of the sample expressions was only given in italics for the understanding of the readers. Two independent bilingual translators, fluent in both Yoruba and English, translated the original Yoruba/ Ekiti dialect jingles into English. One of the translators was familiar with the study's objectives to capture the intended meanings, while the other was blinded to the study's aims to provide an unbiased translation. The two English translations were compared, and discrepancies were discussed and resolved, resulting in a single reconciled English version. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) were employed as theoretical frameworks to examine the linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and semiotic elements used in the jingles. This analysis focused on the interplay of language, culture, and power in shaping meaning and identity. Ethical approval was sought from relevant institutional bodies to ensure compliance with research ethics. Consent was obtained from radio stations and political parties to use their advertisements.

5. ANALYSIS

5.1. Transitivity: representation of the political actors' identity

The candidates from both parties are constructed strategically in transitivity terms to align with their campaign messaging. Below are the frequency and percentage distributions of process type in only clauses where the political actors (Biodun Oyebanji and Segun Oni) are represented as actors, sayers, identified, sensors, behavers, etc., in the campaign jingles.

Table 1. Process type distribution in APC and SDP jingles

Process Type	APC Frequency	APC Percentage (%)	SDP Frequency	SDP Percentage (%)
Material	10	44.23%	11	42.86%
Relational	8	36.54%	8	32.14%
Verbal	0		4	16.07%
Mental	3	13.46%	0	
Total	22	100%	26	100%

In Table 1, there are just four process types (Material, Relational, Verbal, and Mental) attested in the jingles of both APC and SDP. These processes presented the political candidates (Biodun Oyebanji and Segun Oni) as actors, carriers, sayers, and sensors.

Out of the process types, it is evident that Material processes dominate in both jingles, APC (44.23%) and SDP (42.86%), reflecting both parties' strong emphasis on plans, tangible actions, and achievements in their campaigns. This is followed by relational processes. The minor difference suggests that SDP uses material processes slightly more frequently, being more likely to

emphasize their actions or promises. Relational processes are used to establish identity, qualities, or relationships. Both parties use the relational process to highlight the candidates' attributes, reinforcing their suitability for governance. The higher percentage in APC jingles suggests a stronger focus on defining the party's identity as the ruling party and linking its candidate to some desirable attributes. The relational processes in APC jingles indicate efforts to establish the identity and qualifications of the candidates.

5.1.1. Biodun Oyebanji (BAO) as a progressive and visionary leader

The APC uses the material processes to represent BAO as an agent of progress who carries out actions that would move the state forward, and to present the voters as active participants who can make it possible. BAO is predominantly represented with material processes that depict 'moving forward', 'go move'. These represent a positive action foregrounding his capacity and power and his intention to act as an agent of progress and development if elected. The samples below attest to this:

- *He go move Ekiti forward (He will move Ekiti forward);*
- *Omo ju omo lo (A child surpasses another);*
- *A mu utesiwaju ba kete Ekiti (He will bring progress to the entire Ekiti).*

5.1.2. Biodun Oyebanji as a knowledgeable leader

The *surpass* in the extract above implies an action of exceeding or going beyond a standard or limit, which is a form of action or achievement. With it, BAO is represented as having some tangible and observable achievement that no other contestant can match. Thus, he is presented as having the capacity for outstanding performance that his opponents cannot fault.

The mental process in the examples below ("knows the way") is repeatedly used in the representation of BAO with circumstantial elements ("thoroughly, well, well"). Ideologically, this emphasizes his mental capacity to lead well as a man of insight and understanding, someone with the intellectual competence to lead. It is a strategy used to disclaim arguments against his lack of experience when compared with his opponent, Segun Oni, who was once a governor.

- *Let us follow the person wey sabi the way (Let us follow he who knows the way);*
- *He sabi Ekiti well, well (He knows Ekiti thoroughly);*
- *We follow the one who knows the path to victory.*

5.1.3. Biodun Oyebanji as an active change agent and a successor to ongoing development

The material processes in the samples below construct BAO as a visionary leader, active change agent, and successor to ongoing development. He is positioned as the right choice to continue Fayemi's legacy, with emphasis on continuity, progress, and stability, as he is the Secretary to the state government in the current administration.

- *Oun la gunle imo ati idagabasoke ke I lo lo (He will build upon the knowledge and development that is ongoing);*
- *Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji la gbupo lo Gomina Kayode Fayemi (Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji take the mantle of leadership from Kayode Fayemi).*

The material process in the next extract taps into indigenous identity and trust, presenting him as authentically Ekiti, not an outsider:

- *O mu omi Ekiti (He drinks from Ekiti water).*

Also, the relational processes are showing that BAO is the choice of Ekiti people, a strategy to convince the people to join the moving train – the ruling party. Particularly, there is the use of the possessive relational process:

- *This is our own Biodun;*
- *BAO is our choice;*
- *He is the best man for the job;*
- *Biodun Oyebanji ni eni na, eni ti abi ire (Biodun Oyebanji is the man, a child of good fortune);*
- *BAO, the best man for the job;*
- *O loye, O se oloto (He is knowledgeable, honest).*

These attributes construct BAO as morally upright, experienced, and culturally grounded. These are the traits that are highly valued in Ekiti's sociopolitical culture. He is constructed as a safe and worthy custodian of the state's destiny, with an emotional appeal to voters' cultural and ethical sensibilities. This alludes to the fact that the previous governors of the state had always come from the diaspora to contest, and the popular opinion of the masses is that such people do not understand the socio-political terrain of the state, which is the reason given for their poor performance. But Oyebanji had always resided in the state; he had all his education within the state. This is one of the strategies to present him as the best choice for the job.

5.1.4. Segun Oni as a provider and performer

The transitivity of the SDP jingles reveals that Segun Oni is represented differently through the various lexical choices as discussed below. Through the various processes, the SDP jingles construct the image of their governorship candidate, Segun Oni, as a great provider and performer, emphasizing his past achievements when he was governor:

- *O san owo awon osise deede (He paid workers' salaries);*
- *O se omi, o se ona ose afara (He provided water, built roads and bridges).*

The material processes used to represent him in the jingles give a strong focus on his coming back as governor for the second time as a tangible development and economic relief, thereby appealing to the working class and marginalized groups in the state.

- *Segun Oni de, itura de l'Ekiti! (Segun comes, relief has come to the Ekiti people);*
- *Ire de. O de fun wa jaburata (Goodness has come. It has come to us plentifully);*
- *Segun Oni ko ire nbo ni Ekiti oo, Ire de (Segun oni is bringing blessing to Ekiti).*

The use of Lexis like “blessings”, “relief”, and “comfort” constructs him as a redeemer or deliverer. More material processes in the representation of Segun Oni allude to his actions when he was the governor. The jingle projects Segun Oni into the clause as the trigger of a new, better reality, effectively constructing a messianic persona.

5.1.5. A moral, incorruptible, and dependable image of Segun Oni

The relational processes represent Segun Oni's positive attributes. They emphasize his moral integrity as a well-behaved and upright Indigene of Ekiti:

- *Omoluabi Ekiti ti aye nfe (He is a well-behaved Ekiti indigene that everyone loves);*
- *Segun Oni is a true son of Ekiti.*

These attributes are meant to disclaim the arguments against him as not being loved in Ekiti:

- *Oloye Segun Oni ko kere ninu aye (Chief Segun Oni is not insignificant in the society);*
- *Segun Oni logbon, o loye, o si ni iberu olorun (Segun Oni is wise, he is understanding, and he has the fear of God).*

Oni's identity being represented with relational processes across the jingles is emphatically moral and communal. He is described as incorruptible, inclusive, and cherished. He is framed as an authentic man of the people, with a contrast drawn between himself and corrupt or elite-serving politicians. This is a strategy to reinforce his integrity and clean image as a reputation that can earn him the votes of the Ekiti people.

The only verbal process, "*urges*," in the clauses analysed highlights his role in mobilizing the electorate and presenting a vision of change.

Both candidates are constructed strategically in transitivity terms to align with their campaign messaging: the campaign messaging of the APC jingles centres on BAO for continuity and innovation, while that of SDP presents Segun Oni for restoration and proven capacity.

5.2. Mood and modality

Table 2. Mood type distribution in APC and SDP jingles

Mood Type	APC Frequency	APC Percentage (%)	SDP Frequency	SDP Percentage (%)
Declarative	26	46.43%	19	34.55%
Imperative	17	30.36%	22	40.00%
Exclamative	9	16.07%	15	27.27%
Total	52	100%	56	100%

The three mood types are attested in the jingles of both parties (see Table 2). APC relies more on declarative sentences (46.43%), emphasizing statements of fact and certainty about the credibility of the candidate in terms of his experience as a grassroots politician. The higher percentage in APC jingles suggests a focus on informing voters about achievements, policies, or justifying their candidacy. See the example below:

- *BAO, the best man for the job.*

Declarative mood is 34.55% in SDP jingles, which is used to assert the prudence and financial piety of their candidate, Segun Oni:

- *Owo bantabanta lo tun fi sile (He left a huge sum of money in the government);*
- *Segun Oni logbon, o loye, o si ni iberu Olorun (Segun Oni is wise, knowledgeable, and he has the fear of God).*

The imperative mood takes 30.36% in the APC Jingle and is used by the APC to express existential urgency to ensure that there is continuity of the reign of the APC in the state:

- *Ekiti kete, e ma je ka pa ina ogo wa (Ekiti people, don't quench the light of our glory);*
- *E je ka lo dibo fun BAO (Let us go and vote for BAO);*
- *If the music is sweet, continue to dance.*

SDP (40.00%) employs imperatives more frequently than APC (30.36%). This suggests SDP's campaign jingles focus more on persuasion, mobilization, and urging voters to take action by resisting vote buying (electoral malpractices):

- *E je ka jade ni witiwiti (Let us come out en masse);*
- *E je ki a yago fun dibo ko sebe ati jagidijagan (Let us shun selling of votes and violence).*

Exclamatory clauses express emotions such as excitement, surprise, or urgency. SDP (27.27%) also uses more exclamations than APC (16.07%). The higher use of exclamation in SDP's jingle suggests a more emotive appeal, making its messaging more emotionally charged and expressive (see Table 3).

Table 3. Speech function distribution based on mood types

Speech Function	Mood Type	APC Frequency (%)	SDP Frequency (%)	Function in Campaign Context
Statement	Declarative	46.43%	34.55%	Informing voters about policies, achievements, and visions, as well as the credibility of the candidates
Command	Imperative	30.36%	40.00%	Emotional appeal, directing voters to take action, e.g., “Vote APC!”, “Let us vote for continuity”, “A gbodo yan eni ti o to” (We must choose the right person).
Expression	Exclamatory	16.07%	27.27%	Evoking emotions to create enthusiasm or urgency, e.g., “Ekiti koya, o to gee!” (Enough is enough! Ekiti rejects suffering), “Ka sebe jeun ojo kan ko tan sibe, o to gee!” (Cooking soup for just one day is not enough, it’s time for a change!).

Table 4. Frequency and percentage of modality types in APC and SDP jingles

Modality Type	APC Frequency (%)	SDP Frequency (%)
High	23 (43.4%)	29 (50.9%)
Medium	17 (32.1%)	15 (26.3%)
Low	12 (22.6%)	12 (21.1%)

Table 4 shows that jingles of both parties feature modality expressions, but SDP employs them slightly more frequently (50.9%) than APC (43.4%), reinforcing strong commitments and certainty. Each political party expresses conviction that its candidate is the right person for the governorship. While both parties feature a similar and minimal use of low-modality expressions, their strategic approaches differ elsewhere. This may be because APC is the ruling party projecting confidence, while SDP tries to associate with the plight of the masses to make a strong call for change:

- *Ekiti Koya! O to gee! (Enough is enough! Ekiti rejects suffering).*

The dominance of high modality across jingles of both parties suggests a competitive and assertive campaign strategy where both parties project confidence in their candidates. The slight difference in high modality use (SDP 50.9%, APC 43.4%) indicates that SDP relied more on strong, affirmative statements to challenge the ruling party (APC). APC’s higher use of medium modality (32.1%) suggests a strategy of gradual persuasion, allowing voters to see BAO as a continuation of governance while addressing possible concerns. Low modality remains minimal in both parties’ jingles (APC: 22.6%, SDP: 21.1%), as political campaigns typically aim to project authority rather than uncertainty.

5.3. Political context: APC vs. SDP messaging strategies in Ekiti (2022)

From the lexico-grammatical analysis presented above, it is evident that both APC and SDP have different messaging strategies and thematic focus in their jingles based on the cultural and socio-political context of Ekiti state. Before the 2022 gubernatorial election, no political party had won and consecutively ruled Ekiti twice. Even though there had been individuals such as Ayo Fayose and Kayode Fayemi who had been Governors twice, but not consecutively. Segun Oni, who is the candidate of the SDP, had also been governor once.

Based on this contextual background, the APC thematic focus in the jingles was continuity, stability, and experience. Using the incumbency factor, APC positioned Biodun Oyebanji as the natural successor of Kayode Fayemi, highlighting his experience, competence, stability, and local expertise. With the use of various metaphors, the jingles identified the lack of continuity in the governance of the state since its creation as a barrier to development in the state:

- *Ekiti kete, e ma je ka pa ina ogo wa (Ekiti people, don't quench the fire of our glory);*
- *Omo inu ogba ni BAO, Ko le si isu yo (BAO is a child born into a farmstead that cannot mix up crops);*
- *If the music is sweet, continue to dance;*
- *He sabi Ekiti well well (He knows Ekiti thoroughly);*

SDP/Segun Oni's jingles with the thematic focus on Change, Justice, and People's Welfare framed the election as an opportunity to correct past mistakes. Emphasis on workers' welfare tapped into economic concerns. "*Owo osise di sisan*" (*Official money is paid*) referenced the worker-friendly government by Segun Oni in his first administration, while "*Owo bantabanta lo tun fi sile*" (*He left a huge sum of money in the government*) emphasizes the corruption-free governance run by Segun Oni. The slogan "*Ekiti Koya! O to gee!*" (*Enough is enough! Ekiti rejects suffering*) mirrored political awakening. With all these, SDP/Segun Oni in the jingles presents the identity of Segun Oni as an honest and prudent individual who can deliver the state from economic quagmire.

5.4. Repetition and parallelism as reinforcing strategies

Repetition is a key rhetorical and semiotic strategy used in political jingles and political discourse generally to concretize ideologies and ensure the retention of the message in the memory of the listeners. By continuously reinforcing slogans, jingles imprint political ideas into the consciousness of voters. In the analysed campaign jingles, both APC/Biodun Oyebanji (BAO) and SDP/Segun Oni employ repetition and parallel structures to solidify their narratives.

For instance, in the SDP/Segun Oni jingles, the phrase "*Esin funfun gbera*" (*White horse, move!*) is consistently repeated. The parallelism in this phrase establishes a rhythmic pattern that enhances its memorability. Similarly, the APC/BAO jingles counteract this claim by repeatedly asserting "*On i gesin nu le Ado, Moto bogini ni BAO a gun d'oke Ayoba*" (*Riding of horses is forbidden in Ado-Ekiti, BAO will ride a luxurious car to Ayoba Hill*). This cultural claim by APC/BAO implies that SDP and its candidate Segun Oni are also rejected by projecting them and their identity as not culturally acceptable.

Table 5. A table showing the functions of repetition made in the jingles

Party/Candidate	Repetitive Phrase	Function of Repetition
SDP/Segun Oni	<i>Esin funfun gbera! (White horse, move!)</i>	Reinforces party identity and the candidate's perceived political momentum.
APC/Biodun Oyebanji	<i>On I gesin lu le Ado, Moto bogini ni BAO a gun d'oke Ayoba! (BAO will ride a luxurious car to Ayoba Hill!)</i>	Counters SDP's claim, reframing the election as a choice between tradition and modernity.

Repetition serves a semiotic purpose by embedding the party's visual and conceptual symbols into voters' subconscious, aligning the verbal messages with the party's broader campaign imagery (Table 5).

5.5. Metaphor and symbolic representation

In these jingles, metaphor serves to construct political narratives, appealing to the cultural knowledge and collective identity of the people to position the candidates within specific ideological frameworks.

Several metaphorical expressions are found in the jingles of APC, which are meant to construct Biodun Oyebanji as the frontrunner and popular choice. Among the metaphors used in the APC jingles are:

- *Ade iwa lewa (The crown of character is beauty);*
- *A child born within the farmstead who must not uproot the yam.*

The first jingle portrays BAO as a humane individual who possesses moral uprightness that may not be found in his political opponents, while the second one portrays him as an indigenous, nurtured leader with restraint; a trustworthy insider who understands and will not destroy community values or gains, unlike some previous governors who did not have regard for the community and traditional values because of their foreign elitist ideology.

The APC jingles also use metaphor to construct identity through contrast. For instance: “*Ibante kò jó gèlè*” (*The male fighter wears a battle cloth, not a decorative headscarf*). *Ibante* is a minimal piece of cloth (like a loincloth or short underpants) traditionally worn by men, especially when preparing for a fight or combat, while *gèlè* is a beautifully styled female headscarf, symbolic of femininity, elegance, cultural pride, celebration, and occasion. The metaphor compares two distinctly gendered and symbolic garments, emphasizing incomparability. The metaphor implies a hierarchy of decorum and suitability. While both garments serve a purpose, the *gele* connotes beauty, order, and occasion, and *ibante* suggests base readiness for conflict. BAO is therefore constructed as the civilized, desirable option, while the opponent is less refined or less fitting. “*Ibante kò jó gèlè*” sharply contrasts the personality and positive attributes of Biodun Oyebanji and other contestants.

There is also a use of metaphor for framing ideology in the APC jingle: “*If the music is sweet, continue to dance.*” When music is enjoyable, it’s only natural to keep dancing. It suggests continuation of something pleasurable or beneficial. In the context of the political jingle, this metaphor encourages the electorate to sustain their support for BAO (Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji) and the APC, because their governance (the “music”) has been beneficial, enjoyable, and successful (“sweet”). Thus, they should vote for continuity (“keep dancing”). The metaphor is used to naturalize the idea that APC governance has been enjoyable or effective. It subtly encourages the listener to associate political continuity with pleasure, satisfaction, and progress. This may not be universally agreed upon. But by framing it as a commonly accepted truth, it discourages opposition. This metaphor functions as a discursive instrument to maintain power by portraying continuity as the only rational, emotionally satisfying option.

In the SDP jingles, metaphorical construction is built on equating Segun Oni’s presence with the arrival of blessings and comfort: “*Segun Oni de, ire de*” (*Segun Oni has come, goodness has come*); “*Segun Oni, itura de*” (*Segun Oni, relief has come*). This suggests that his return to political leadership guarantees prosperity, well-being, and emotional relief for the people of Ekiti, implying previous or current hardship under other governments. Segun Oni is metaphorically constructed as the embodiment of prosperity and well-being. His arrival is not just political but transformational.

The metaphor of a white horse (*Esin funfun*) in the SDP campaign jingles is a direct semiotic signifier drawn from the party’s official logo. “*Esin funfun gbera*” metaphorically signifies that Segun Oni’s political journey is swift, unchallenged, and divinely sanctioned, where the white horse signifies progress, strength, and legitimacy.

Furthermore, in Yoruba cultural contexts, a horse represents royalty, power, and prestige, historically associated with warriors and noble leadership. By invoking this metaphor, the SDP aligns Segun Oni's candidacy with these culturally resonant themes, making his leadership seem inevitable and historically justified.

In response to SDP's dominant horse metaphor, the APC jingle deliberately deconstructs and re-signifies the narrative by stating: "*O in gèsin nùlé Ado, moto bogini ni BAO a gun d'oke Ayoba*" (*Riding a horse is taboo in Ado-Ekiti, BAO will ride a luxurious car to Ayoba Hill*).

This phrase engages in a semiotic struggle by rejecting the SDP's equine symbolism by tagging it as taboo and replacing it with a counter-image, which is culturally acceptable: the luxurious car (*moto bogini*). Here, the car symbolizes modernity, sophistication, and executive power, positioning BAO as a leader of progress rather than tradition. The phrase "*oke Ayoba*" (Ayoba Hill) further reinforces the trajectory of political success, as the government house in Ekiti is located on Ayoba Hill, making the car metaphor function as an emblem of unstoppable political ascent.

This is a form of "contestatory intertextuality" (Kristeva, 1986), where a political text (APC's jingle) deliberately interacts with and subverts the meaning of another one (SDP's jingle). This discursive contest illustrates how political campaigns strategically deploy signs and symbols to construct competing realities for voters.

5.6. Proverbs and cultural resonance

The use of Yoruba proverbs in these jingles enhances cultural authenticity and persuasive appeal. Proverbs act as intertextual linguistic resources that draw from collective cultural wisdom to validate political claims. For instance, the SDP's phrase "*Esin funfun gbera*" indirectly echoes traditional Yoruba sayings about horses as symbols of destiny and forward movement. Similarly, the APC's counter-statement "*O in gèsin nùlé Ado*" appeals to local beliefs that certain actions (riding a horse) are culturally inappropriate in Ado-Ekiti (the state capital), thereby discrediting the opponent's symbolism through cultural logic. By embedding such ethnographic semiotics within campaign discourse, political jingles establish a deep connection between language, identity, and ideological positioning.

The use of Ekiti dialect, pidgin Yoruba, and English languages (code switching and code mixing) allows the jingles to reach literate and non-literate voters, broadening their impact. Indigenous language and cultural semiotics remain crucial tools for political mobilization in Nigeria, reinforcing the need for deeper engagement with local linguistic and rhetorical traditions to carry the voters in the grassroots along in political matters.

6. DISCUSSION

The campaign jingles do more than promote political candidates. They manufacture consent, construct social truths, and reinforce ideological worldviews using strategic linguistic devices. By drawing from transitivity, metaphor, repetition, and cultural grounding, these jingles: reframe voter behaviour as moral action; construct political actors as semiotic symbols of continuity or liberation; embed cultural expectations into political messaging, and reveal how language controls perception, memory, and choice.

The jingles distinctly encode opposing ideological positions. BAO is presented as the embodiment of developmental continuity, with jingles heavily deploying relational and material process types (e.g., "*he is our son*," "*he will continue*," "*he will build*"). This discursive choice ties his candidacy to legacy, familiarity, and stability. Conversely, Segun Oni is portrayed through rela-

tional and material processes that frame his return as a disruption of the status quo and a promise of redemption (e.g., “*Segun Oni has come*,” “*Ire de*,” “*Itura de*”).

Lexical choices in the jingles draw on Yoruba cultural ethics to construct both candidates’ moral identities. For instance, BAO is associated with moral restraint through the proverb “*a child born on the farm must not uproot the yam*,” suggesting maturity, humility, and responsible leadership. For Segun Oni, phrases such as “*Ire de*” (*Goodness has come*) connect his candidacy to divine favour and communal well-being, making him a symbolic figure of hope and restoration. Both jingles employ mood and modality structures to guide voter behaviours. BAO’s campaign uses imperatives and modal adjuncts in inclusive constructions such as “*Let us vote wisely*” and “*Vote for our son*,” implying collective agency. Oni’s jingles use high-modality declaratives like “*Enough is enough*” and “*Segun Oni will restore peace*,” which assert urgency and inevitability. These structures subtly shape how audiences perceive their roles in the electoral process.

Discursive silences are strategically embedded in the jingles. BAO’s jingles avoid direct mention of economic hardship or governance failure, presupposing voters’ satisfaction. Oni’s jingles, while implying dissatisfaction, avoid direct attacks on BAO, positioning Segun Oni as a morally superior and constructive alternative. This discursive balance maintains face-saving while allowing ideological contrast.

The jingles also employ metaphor as a framing device for civic responsibility. BAO’s jingles deploy metaphorical constructs rooted in cultural practices, such as “*Ibante ko jo gele*” (*The male fighter wears a battle cloth, not a decorative headscarf*), which juxtaposes seriousness and frivolity to frame BAO as a prepared and capable leader. “*If the music is sweet, continue to dance*” further frames political continuity as a rational, even pleasurable, civic action. These metaphors encourage voters to equate political support with cultural wisdom and practical reasoning. These findings confirm that campaign jingles are ritualistic performances of power and tools for symbolic warfare, crucial in shaping democratic participation in a linguistically and culturally rich polity like Ekiti State.

These findings align with Odebunmi (2016) and Adetunji (2006), who highlight how Nigerian political discourse thrives on metaphor, intertextuality, and indigenous proverbs to construct persuasive narratives. This research also finds that repetition and parallelism enhance message retention and ideological reinforcement, which also corroborates the findings of Adetunji’s (2006) study on Nigerian presidential campaigns’ discourse. The SDP’s use of the “white horse” metaphor aligns with symbolic representations of power and nobility in Yoruba sociopolitical contexts, reinforcing cultural resonance in political messaging. However, unlike previous studies that focus on unidirectional messaging, this study highlights how opposing parties engage in symbolic contestation, with the APC countering the SDP’s equestrian metaphor with modernist automobile imagery.

Persuasion is achieved through repetition and metaphors. All the candidates use repetition and parallelism to reinforce party messages. Metaphors and proverbs create cultural resonance, making the jingles more impactful. For instance, the Horse is the logo of SDP, and in SDP/ONI jingles, there is the prevalence of the statement, “*Esin funfun gbera*” (*White horse move*), which metaphorically means how swift the journey of Segun Oni will be to the government house through voting. The APC/BAO also produced their jingle with a counterstatement to oppose the assertion of the SDP: “*O in gesin nule Ado, moto bogini ni BAO a gun doke Ayoba*” (*Riding a horse is a taboo in Ad-Ekiti, BAO will ride a luxurious car to Ayoba Hill*).

Meanwhile, this study acknowledges the emotional engagement in campaign jingles; it finds that the Ekiti gubernatorial campaign jingles rely more on competitive intertextuality and counter-discursive framing than fear-based rhetoric. The jingles function as sites where power, ideology,

identity, and social structure intersect. They are subtle instruments of sociopolitical control and agency formation in the electoral context.

7. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated how linguistic strategies are central to meaning-making and identity construction in political campaign jingles. Using Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the findings reveal that political jingles are not merely entertainment tools but strategic instruments for ideological construction, contestation, and voter persuasion. The linguistic resources employed in the jingles – transitivity, metaphor, repetition, modality, and cultural allusion – collectively construct political identities and shape public perception. The study showcases how linguistic choices are strategically deployed to perform identity work, guide meaning construction, and influence civic behaviours, reject, and reframe political narratives. The intersection of language, culture, and politics in these jingles underscores their significance as artifacts of socio-political discourse.

Statement of Conflict of Interest

The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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